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ΕΙΣ ΦΑΟΣ
George Bancroft

THE

LIGHT

OF

NATURE

PURSUED.

BY

EDWARD SEARCH, Esq;

VOLUME III. PART I.

Lights of NATURE and GOSPEL blended.

The Christian Religion is, in all its Parts, adapted to the present Nature and Circumstances of Mankind; and it is not possible to see the Reasonableness and Beauty of the Gospel, without considering the Condition and Quality of those for whose Use and Benefit it is designed.

Bp Sherlock, Vol. IV. p. 100.

The Posthumous WORK of

ABRAHAM TUCKER, ESQ.

Published from his Manuscript as intended for the Press by the AUTHOR.

LONDON:

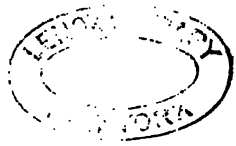
Printed by W. OLIVER, in Bartholomew-Close:

Sold by T. PAYNE and Son, at the Mews-Gate, Charing-cross;
J. F. and C. RIVINGTON, in St Paul's Churchyard;
T. CADELL, in the Strand; L. DAVIS, in Holborn;
and E. and C. DILLY, in the Poultry.

M DCC LXXVII.

ERRATA.

Page	Line	
13	19	*for* derivated *read* derivative
59	4	dele the ſecond as
73	14	*for* our *r.* one
76	6	*after* preventing *add* them
97	16	*for* inſenſible *r.* inſenſibly
	17	*for* eſſential *r.* eſſentially
122	18	*for* know *r.* knew
164	5	*for* certain *r.* certainly
180	3	*for* love *r.* loſe
187	16	*for* the ſecond for *r.* of
189	7	*for* immenſibility *r.* inſenſibility
190	15	*for* fiſter *r.* fider.
191	11	*for* inviſible *r.* in viſible
204	11	*for* inlands *r.* iſlands
206	15	*for* effect *r.* affect
223	27	*after* ſo *add* as
228	20	*after* than *add* that
243	2	dele that
248	3	*for* nearer *r.* near
	4	*after* ſenſe *add* which
257	23	*for* of *r.* with
258	4	*for* oppreſſors *r.* oppoſers
310	6	*for* the *r.* his
317	4	*for* threatens *r.* threaten
320	1	*for* with *r.* without
324	24	*for* compleat *r.* competent
350	2	*for* not *r.* nor
367	18	*after* through *add* the
370	10	dele if
378	3	*for* neceſ- *r.* acceſ-
398	3	from bottom, *for* require *r.* acquire



THE

LIGHT OF NATURE PURSUED.

VOL. III. PART I.

CHAP. I.

PARTITION OF THE GENERAL RULE.

NATURE has given to each ſpecies of animals ſome diſtinguiſhing power or quality for their preſervation and entertainment. The lion lives by his courage: the elephant by his ſtrength: the ſwine by his ſturdineſs. The ſquirrel delights in his agility: the ſwallow in the ſtrength and ſwiftneſs of his wing. The ſpider ſeeks his maintenance from his cunning: the bee from her induſtry. The nation of flies and little fiſhes, artleſs and defenceleſs, expoſed for a prey to all other creatures, ſubſiſt by their prolificneſs, multiplying them in greater numbers than all other creatures can deſtroy. To man ſhe has given underſtanding to ſupply the want of ſtrength, robuſtneſs, agility and ſagacity of inſtinct,

wherein he falls ſhort of his brother animals: and to make the qualities he finds in them ſubſervient to his own uſes. Therefore our underſtanding is the faculty it behoves us moſt ſeduouſly to cultivate, becauſe from that we may principally expect to receive a ſupply of our uſes and enjoyments.

Yet we need not too much deſpiſe our fellow-creatures for the want of it: for we cannot enter into their ideas, nor know for certain whether their lives do not paſs as pleaſurably as our own. We know our pains are doubled by reflection, and perhaps it does not add much to our pleaſures, which are made thereby to ſatiate the ſooner: if we have funds of entertainment unknown to them, we have likewiſe many ſources of diſquietude and anxiety in our conſciouſneſs and foreſight, from which they are exempt: nor have there been thoſe wanting among us who have acknowledged they paſſed happier days while children or ſchoolboys, than they ever taſted among the fruits of reaſon when ripened to full maturity. One thing we may reſt aſſured of, that nature being eſtabliſhed in perfect wiſdom, aſſigns to every creature the faculties and powers ſuitable to its ſtation; ſo that all alike perform their part in the public ſervices of the univerſe.

Neither would it do us any good, nor ought it to give us any pleaſure, if we could prove the condition of other animals ever ſo wretched and deſpi-

deſpicable: for our happineſs is to be eſtimated by the quantity we poſſeſs, not by the proportion it bears to that of other creatures. If their condition any ways affects us, it ſhould be by the goodneſs of it; which will naturally incline us to think the moſt favourable of them poſſible. For as our heavenly Father diſplays his goodneſs by giving the young ravens their food when they cry, ſo we ſhall beſt diſplay our own by rejoicing that they have their food when they cry for it: for the proſpect of good and enjoyment anywhere is a feaſt to the rightly-turned mind. Therefore inſtead of delighting to draw compariſons between ourſelves and the irrational tribes, or ſtudying to exaggerate our own nobility and pre-eminence of privileges above them, we ſhould better imitate the moſt perfect of all beings by entertaining a good will and favourable inclination towards them; which would keep our ears open to whatever can be ſuggeſted for their advantage, and make us even wiſh they might inherit a portion in futurity, if any ſolid argument can be brought in ſupport of it.

Nevertheleſs as water ſupplies breath to fiſhes, and hay nouriſhes the cattle, yet are unfit for the reſpiration and ſuſtenance of man; wherefore we chooſe the freſh air and wholſome food; not becauſe a nobler kind of ſupport, but becauſe better ſuited to our conſtitution: ſo let us avail ourſelves of our rational faculty, not for

the pride of its ſuperior excellence, but for its being more particularly adapted to our uſes. For ſenſe and appetite may prove infallible guides to the ſpecies put under their direction, yet would perpetually lead us aſtray: and naſtineſs, however giving a real enjoyment to the ſwine, perhaps greater than we find in our perfumes, or even in the contemplation of our ſciences, would fill us with diſorder and loathing. So that without thinking any thing contemptible in itſelf wherever nature has placed it, we may deſpiſe beſtial appetites as ignoble and unworthy of us, becauſe we have another faculty we may employ to higher uſes and nobler advantages than we can receive from them. Thus it becomes our glory to improve our underſtanding, to raiſe it above the mire of appetite and paſſion, and approach as near as our capacities will permit to that openneſs and largeneſs of mind we believe belonging to ſuperiour orders of Being.

2. But as man differs from beaſt in the faculty of underſtanding, ſo does one man differ from another in the degrees of this faculty. Yet he that poſſeſſes a large ſhare need not think himſelf more highly favoured by Heaven nor deſpiſe his weaker brother upon that account; for his talents are given him for the publick ſervice, ſo that others have an intereſt in them equally with himſelf: nor can we doubt that providence diſpenſes to every one the qualifications proper

proper for performing the part he has to act, and which rightly employed may be productive of happineſs, the only thing that makes all other poſſeſſions valuable. Therefore let every one, according as provided by nature or education with the means of cultivating his underſtanding, improve it to the greateſt height he can attain, as the taſk peculiarly aſſigned him, deeming it ignoble and unbecoming to ſtand at a lower pitch: yet without thinking meanly of others who are called to other duties. For true honour reſults, not from the talents we poſſeſs nor the part allotted us, but from the manner of our employing them and the juſtneſs of our action.

But the improvement of underſtanding goes on by ſlow degrees, and the firſt advances towards it are made by laying in a ſtock of materials, whoſe uſes we are to find out after we have ſecured the poſſeſſion of them. Hence comes the deſire of knowledge which the inquiſitive mind thirſts after, even in matters of curioſity and ſpeculation; as not knowing what real benefit may be afterwards ſtricken out of them. Beſides the work of ſcience being large, requires many labourers to take in hand the ſeveral parts of it: ſo that a man has a chance of being uſeful by making diſcoveries whereof he can find no uſe, becauſe the materials he furniſhes may be turned to good advantage by ſomebody elſe. Nevertheleſs uſe being the proper end of know-

ledge, it behoves us to turn our enquiries into the way that may lead to ſomething profitable: leaving nothing to other hands that we are capable of executing ourſelves.

Upon this principle I have endeavoured to conduct myſelf in the two former volumes: wherein, howmuchſoever dealing in matters of curioſity and novelty, I have all along had real benefit in view; and have paſſed over ſeveral curious ſubjects occurring upon the way, becauſe they ſeemed unavailing to the main purpoſe. It having been my intention to draw up ſuch a ſcheme of nature and the fundamentals of natural religion, founded upon the baſis of experience and obſervations reſulting therefrom as might appear compact and conſiſtent throughout to the ſtudious and diſpaſſionate; yet I do not preſent it as convenient for common uſe, nor deny that it may contain ſome parts diſguſtful, or even dangerous to common apprehenſions; therefore ſince I cannot content myſelf with doing a little ſervice while there ſeems a poſſibility of doing more; I ſhall now apply my attention to general convenience, and endeavour to produce ſomething wherein the plain man may find his account: yet ſtriving if poſſible ſo to connect my following labours with the foregoing that the ſtudious and clear-ſighted ſhall not take exceptions againſt them.

3. We have ſeen that ſenſe and appetite are the firſt ſprings of action, impelling to objects that

thut have been found grateful and driving from the contrary. In proceſs of time as experience grows to maturity, it produces the paſſions, affections and habitual deſires; which have ſomething pleaſing or diſagreeable to ſenſe for their object, and urge to the means apprehended requiſite for procuring or eſcaping it. Theſe incentives are given to all animals to ſpur on their activity and find it continual employment: whence it appears that preſent pleaſure and gratification are the natural motives to action. But beſides theſe, man poſſeſſes the faculty of underſtanding, which preſents a large ſcene of objects to his view: ſo that while appetite and ſenſe are buſied in their preſent purſuits, he can contemplate the remote conſequences of meaſures and make an eſtimate of their whole amount.

Hence ariſes a new object of purſuit, which is Good, commonly diſtinguiſhed from pleaſure, yet differing rather in quantity than kind: for good, as Mr. Locke obſerves, is that which produces pleaſure, and this pleaſure muſt come to be preſent ſome time or other, or it will not deſerve the name. Thus pleaſure and gratification ſtill remain the motive even of rational undertakings; but the greater diſtant enjoyment in preference to the leſs near at hand. Nevertheleſs man partakes ſo much of the beaſt as that his active powers lie conſtantly under the guidance of appetite and deſire: wherefore it avails nothing for reaſon to diſcern what is good, unleſs

leſs ſhe can raiſe ſuch a deſire as ſhall find gratification in the approach towards it, or vexation in the apprehenſion of miſſing it.

Now reaſon has in ſome meaſure a power to raiſe ſuch deſires: for by often figuring the diſtant good as preſent in imagination, ſhe may at length bring deſire to faſten upon certain rules and meaſures of conduct leading towards it; and thereby generate a new ſet of ſenſes, uſually ſtiled the moral: which when fully acquired, operate in the ſame manner with the natural; by impulſe to preſent gratification of them, without regard to further good effects that firſt gave them their vigour. But men fall into miſtakes concerning their moral ſenſes, by entertaining too high an opinion of their underſtanding: for they ſuppoſe it able upon every occaſion to penetrate the bottom of their meaſures, and diſcern the grounds whereon they were undertaken; ſo finding no inducement beyond the recommendation of the moral ſenſe, they imagine this a notice given immediately by nature, like thoſe of colours, ſounds and taſtes, conveyed by the bodily ſenſes. But our underſtanding, ſcarce ever capable of looking through the whole length of the li[illegible] has run, reſts upon certain marks and [illegible] diſcerning the reaſons prev[illegible] bliſh them. And if the m[illegible] never worked them out by [illegible] tion and reaſon[illegible]

channels of inſtruction, example and cuſtom: but whoever firſt introduced them into the world, learned their value by having experienced the neceſſity and expedience of them. Moſt of our moral ſenſes relate to our intercourſe among one another: for as we live in ſociety, we cannot attain our own intereſts without gaining the aſſiſtance and good will of others, which can only be done by returns of mutual good offices to them.

Thus we ſee the foundation of ſocial virtues lies in our own good: and while we confined our contemplation to this ſublunary ſcene of life, we could not find they had this foundation to ſupport them in ſome caſes that might happen, which therefore remained as exceptions to their obligation. But the ſequel of our enquiries having diſcovered to us our individuality and unperiſhable nature, it appeared that we had an intereſt in futurity, and became expedient to examine whether that intereſt might not ſtand affected by the practiſe of the ſocial virtues; ſo that they might ſtill have their proper foundation to ſupport them, even in caſes where they tend to our damage in this preſent life.

We then caſt our eyes around upon external nature, which ſoon led us to the author of nature, who was found to be One, Omnipotent, [illegible]. From whence it followed [illegible] being the work of one hand, muſt

muſt be formed upon one all-comprehenſive plan: the ſeveral parts being mutually adjuſted, ſo as to compoſe altogether one entire Whole; and the laws provided for each particular diſtrict, having a reſpect to the general utility.

We conſidered likewiſe that all cauſes muſt derive their powers and manners of operation originally from the firſt; whoſe omniſcience would not permit him to be ignorant of the particular effects they ſhould produce, nor to put them in motion without a deſign of producing the very effects to reſult therefrom. Thus all events fall out according to the cauſes appointed by God; and that proviſion of cauſes he makes for bringing them to paſs, we call Providence, which extends throughout all the regions of his boundleſs empire. So that no creature in all nature receives a pleaſure unleſs by the divine diſpenſation, nor falls under a pain unleſs by the divine permiſſion.

Then upon contemplation of the divine equity, we could find no ground to imagine the ſtream of bounty ſhould flow unequally: but that however it might appear confined to particular quarters at times, yet upon the whole it would be diſtributed in like proportion among all the creatures. Thus the good of every creature, being the ſhare belonging to it of the whole good in the creation, cannot be promoted otherwiſe than by encreaſing the common ſtock. So that tho' private intereſt be the ultimate end of action;

action; yet it is ſo covered by the general intereſt, that whoever takes his aim at the latter, cannot fail of hitting the former: and whoever aims aſide the one, though he may fancy himſelf gaining a little preſent advantage, will find in the long run he has miſſed the other.

4. Thus we have gotten a fundamental rule of reaſon to be the groundwork of all our ſchemes and deliberations, namely, the encreaſe of happineſs in nature; but it is neither neceſſary nor feaſible that this rule ſhould actuate us in all our motions: for though the wiſeman will act always conformably to rule, he need not act always by rule, becauſe when his appetites happen to take the right turn of themſelves, there is no occaſion for applying any rule to direct them. We have natural appetites given to inſtigate us in purſuing the means of our ſecurity, preſervation and enjoyment: we have derivated deſires, either imbibed from other perſons, or acquired by our own induſtry and management, which conduct us to things uſeful, convenient and entertaining. While theſe lead to nothing inconſiſtent with our fundamental rule, reaſon has no more to do than ſtand ready to take alarm in caſe they ſhould deviate into a dangerous courſe: nay, ſhe may aſſiſt in contriving how to compaſs any preſent deſire, ſo it be innocent. For preſent pleaſure and gratification is our good, when tending to nothing hurtful in the conſequences: good itſelf being no more than the

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expedient for reaſon to in-
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point. Yet reaſon, in
of life, can ſeldom get a
ſtar; therefore wants a
mark the line wherein it lies,
divide the horizon into diſtinct
or to lay aſide the figure, our
too general for common uſe;
examine what particular rules
thence, which may ſerve to
the ſeveral parts of our conduct.

It may perhaps be thought at firſt ſight, that the advancement of general good implies ſomething whereof the univerſe in general may reap a benefit: but we are too inconſiderable creatures ever to have a proſpect of doing ſuch extenſive ſervice. Yet the whole being made up of individuals, the general good is promoted by whatever good can be done among them: ſo that our rule directs us to regard the intereſts of our fellow-creatures ſtanding within our reach, becauſe by procuring an addition to happineſs [illegible] where, we ſha[illegible]ſe the common ſtock.

Then

Then it is obvious that each of us is one of the individuals compoſing the whole, ſo that the good we procure for ourſelves is a like encreaſe of the common ſtock with that we can procure for another. Whence it becomes a part of our duty to be regardful of our own intereſts, to improve our faculties as well of body as mind in ſuch manner as may render them moſt ſerviceable to ourſelves, to provide the means contributing to our own enjoyment, and in our intercourſe among others to take care they do not encroach upon our happineſs.

For if I pleaſe myſelf by doing ſomething that tends to the greater detriment of another, or if I let him pleaſe himſelf in ſomething that tends to my greater detriment; the common ſtock will ſuffer diminution in both caſes. Thus our fundamental rule parts into two principal branches, Prudence and Benevolence: the one attentive to our own intereſts, the other to thoſe of our fellow-creatures: and both together call upon us conſtantly to prefer either intereſt, whichever ſhall appear the more valuable; which two branches are commonly called our duty to ourſelves, and to our neighbour.

6. If we reflect upon the grounds whereon we have eſtabliſhed our fundamental rule, and the ſteps whereby we arrived at what knowledge we have of the inviſible world and mutual connection of intereſts, we may recollect they lay ſolely in the character of that Power who

is

is the Author of all nature viſible and inviſible. Should we caſt aſide the thoughts of him, our proſpect would lie dark, uncertain and comfortleſs before us. We might know our own immortality, but ſhould not know how that immortality would paſs; whether in wiſdom or folly, in plenty or diſtreſs, in pleaſure or pain, among friends or enemies: nor could we tell what acquiſitions to make here that might be depended upon to ſtand us in ſtead hereafter. And we ſhould have no inducement from our own intereſt, that natural and original ſpring of action, to conſult the public benefit; any further than we might expect ſome advantage from it in this preſent life: or were we to harbour falſe thoughts of him, we might imagine him revengeful, ſevere, impoſſible to be pleaſed, the object of dread and terror: or elſe capricious, partial, delighting to ſee us worry and torment one another.

Therefore that part of prudence which relates to the ſolace of our own minds and the pleaſing hope of an intereſt that cannot be hurt by ſiniſter accidents here below, and the intereſt of our fellow-creatures, ſo far as it may ſtand affected by our unreſerved goodwill towards them, make it incumbent upon us to cultivate juſt ſentiments of the ſupreme Being, and practiſe all methods in our power of ſtrengthening and rectifying them. Whence ſprings a third branch of the fundamental rule,

which

which is Piety, or our duty to God. For in ſtrictneſs of ſpeaking we owe no duty to God directly; not that he has no claim to our ſervices, but becauſe there is no real ſervice that we can do him, and he will not require of us impoſſibilities. For when we have done all, we are ſtill unprofitable ſervants: our good works add nothing to his ſtrength, or riches, or happineſs: if we ſing pſalms with ever ſo much devotion and melody, we afford him no entertainment; and if we blaſpheme from morning to night, we cannot give him a moment's vexation.

But it is ſaid, God made all things for his glory, and that is the aim we ought conſtantly to purſue in our ſeveral ſtations. This may be the proper aim to direct us in our proceedings, who cannot always ſee the remoteſt of his purpoſes: but can we ſuppoſe this the ultimate end that ſet his omnipotence in motion? ſhall we take our conceptions of him from our own taſtes and infirmities? or imagine that as an earthly poet labours to compleat his work that he may review the performance with conſcious complacence, and make his way to univerſal fame: ſo God, tired with an uncomfortable ſolitude, ſpread forth his worlds in admirable wiſdom and infinite variety, that he might amuſe himſelf with beholding his handy work, and created innumerable hoſts of intelligent Beings, to make

his hours chearful with their hallelujahs? Is it not a more probable conſtruction of the expreſſion, to underſtand thereby that he made all things in goodneſs, which is the attribute for which we have moſt reaſon to glorify him? and that he expects we ſhould be continually attentive to his glory, becauſe this is moſt eminently conducive to our happineſs? therefore the moſt effectual way of glorifying him is, by improving the condition of our own minds, and acquiring a ſteady attachment to the good of our fellow-creatures. For to them we may do ſervice: and what is done unto one of the leaſt of theſe our brethren, is done unto him. And if he does enjoin us other particular ſervices to exerciſe our obedience, it is becauſe he knows that obedience moſt beneficial to ourſelves. Thus in all lights it appears, that our duty to God grows out of our duty to ourſelves and to our neighbour.

7. Many perhaps may think it a degradation of our duty to God, to make it a ſecondary obligation: whereas the moſt judicious and diſcerning perſons have always eſteemed it the firſt and principal duty, to take place before the other two. But ſo it may well be notwithſtanding all we have been ſaying; for many things in common life, having only a derivative value, yet are prized above their originals. What is money worth, unleſs for the neceſſaries and conveniencies to be had therewith? yet

yet if the houſe were on fire, who would not run to ſnatch up his caſh, and leave his beds, his furniture, the victuals in his larder, to periſh in the flames? for his pockets will hold money to purchaſe more goods than he could poſſibly carry away upon his back. What is an eſtate good for unleſs the produce it will yield? therefore land is valued according to its fertility. Yet who would not rather have his growing crop deſtroyed than his eſtate taken from him? and for this obvious reaſon, becauſe by loſing his land he loſes all the ſucceeding crops he might expect to reap from it. So when the intereſts of religion happen to interfere with public or private intereſt, they ought nevertheleſs to be purſued: becauſe more miſchief would enſue from a breach made upon them than any preſent advantage could compenſate.

But then care muſt be taken that the religion, whereto ſuch ſacrifice is made, be pure and genuine: which it cannot be unleſs it tend ſo much to the benefit of the creatures as to make it worth their while to offer the ſacrifice. For religion was given for our good, not for that of the giver; wherefore the fruits it yields are the proper criterion to diſtinguiſh between true religion and hereſy. We cannot indeed always know thoſe fruits, for they are ſometimes brought forth by ſecret ways we think not of; therefore we are not to reject every thing whereof

we do not directly diſcern the benefit: but whatever opinion or practiſe tends viſibly to the diſorder of our own mind, or to leſſen our idea of the divine goodneſs, or to make us remiſs in our duties to one another, we may ſafely pronounce heretical.

If we encourage gloomy and ſuſpicious notions of God, filling us with doubts or deſpondencies, and making him our dread and terror rather than our protection and confidence: this is not for his glory, which ſhines brighteſt in the opinion of his fatherly care and beneficence. If we conceive him partial, confining his favours within ſome narrow pale: neither is this for his glory, which is the greater by how much the more extenſive. If we be prone to cenſure or deteſt all who differ from us, either in opinion or way of life: we do not pay obedience to him who expects from us, that we ſhould even love our enemies. If we make our virtue auſtere, painful and uninviting; we do not let our light ſo ſhine before men as that they may ſee our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. If we place our dependance upon the externals of religion, thinking them acceptable to him for their own ſake: we degrade him in our imagination, as ſuppoſing him to want ſomething from us for his own uſe, and forgetting that his ſervice is what ſervice we can do to one of the leaſt among our brethren. If we continually hunt after

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ſermons and prayers, in neglect of the duties of our ſtation: we prefer that which is only a nominal ſervice to what he will eſteem a real one. If we beſtow all our goods to feed the poor, and make them the ſole object of our thoughts: we forget there are duties owing to the rich, to our friends and to the community; and that obedience does not conſiſt in performing one ſingle branch of duty that happens to touch us ſtrongly, but in applying induſtriouſly to every good office wherein we may be ſerviceable.

8. Since then our own real benefit and that of our fellow-creatures is to be the grand object of our endeavours, and our obedience is beſt manifeſted by applying them thereto; we ought to labour to make that benefit as extenſive as poſſible, preferring always the greater good before the leſs. Whence our principal attention ſhould ſeem due to the improvement of our condition in another life, as being the more durable and valuable: and to the ſervices of purely ſpiritual ſubſtances, as being more numerous than the embodied falling under our notice. For it has been ſhewn in the laſt volume, that neither of theſe objects lie beyond our reach; our preſent ſtate being preparatory to the next, and our little tranſactions anſwering ſome uſes of inviſible Beings. But though they do not lie beyond our reach, they lie in the dark where we cannot poſſibly grope them out: for we know

not how any thing we can do will affect other ſyſtems, ſo might as well do them a diſpleaſure as a ſervice by our officiouſneſs; therefore we have no duty to them, not that we owe them no kindneſs, but becauſe we know not by what methods we can do them any.

And with regard to our future ſtate, we can gather nothing from experience and obſervation to direct us what proviſion to make for it. Our preſent appetites and deſires would be troubleſome, and our ſcience uſeleſs, in a country where all things are totally diſſimilar from that we inhabit now: our virtues being acquired affections, our moral wiſdom and ſentiments of piety being habitual trains of thinking, connect with the animal machine, becauſe we find them ſtronger or weaker according as that ſtands diſpoſed, nor can expect to carry them with us when ſeparated from that: ſo that we may probably be born into the new world as much a blank paper as ever we came into this. We may have already within us our ſpiritual body wherein we are to riſe again: and this may receive alteration from our ways of living and acting and thinking; for that it ſhould do ſo, agrees with the courſe of nature in other caſes open to our obſervation. We know that our pre-exiſtent ſtate of the womb was preparatory to our preſent, by forming and faſhioning thoſe inſtruments of action we have now to employ. A learned German phyſician, one Stahl, as we

are

are told by Doctor Hartley, has undertaken to prove that all our automatic or mechanical motions, ſuch as the pulſation of the heart and ſecretions of the glands, are conſequences of certain voluntary motions performed by the fœtus: ſo that we lay the foundation of our ſtrength or weakneſs, alertneſs or ſtupidity, by our own conduct while yet unborn.

But without laying ſtreſs upon the opinion of a perſon of uncertain credit, nobody can deny that our condition in this world ſtands very much affected by what paſſed with us in the little material world whereof we were the ſole inhabitant. For from thence we derive our health and vigour of body, the ſuppleneſs of our joints, the perfectneſs of our limbs, the tablet of our memory, our natural talents and capacities, enabling us to diſcern, to diſtinguiſh, compare, allude, and practiſe all other exerciſes conducing to our benefit and entertainment. And though we brought from thence neither knowledge nor habit, nor expertneſs, nor accompliſhment of any kind, but came away a blank paper: yet our paper is very differently made and variouſly diſpoſed to receive uſeful characters upon it, according to the workmanſhip it underwent in the paper-mill. Nevertheleſs, no anatomy can lay open our ſpiritual body to our view, or ſhow in what proportion and lineaments its perfection conſiſts, with what nerves and fibres of the animal frame it connects, or in what par-

ticular manner their action affects it: ſo as that we might know the regimen of diet, the courſes of exerciſe, the topics of meditation, the affections, deſires, habits, ſtores of knowledge, and caſts of imagination, proper to faſhion the little limbs and organs, and render them fit inſtruments for conveying the notices we ſhall want to receive, or performing the works we ſhall have to execute.

9. Thus have we a preparation of the utmoſt importance to make, without any knowledge how to proceed in the making it. Therefore under this uncertainty let us look up to Heaven for direction: for thither we are privileged to reſort when all ſublunary means of Information fail us. it is currently believed that directions have been delivered by ſpecial meſſengers ſent from thence and duly authoriſed, nor ſhall I pretend to queſtion their authority: but my province being human reaſon, I am not intitled to paſs the bounds I have preſcribed myſelf. Let us then ſearch about in order to find a mark of direction ſomewhere within our own territory. Now our reaſon has led us to the knowledge of one Governour, by whoſe power and wiſdom all things are regulated as well in heaven as upon earth: and conſequently that the univerſe was formed upon one all-comprehenſive plan, that the regions it contains are parts of one entire whole, and the laws provided for them ſeverally are but branches of one general polity: ſo that whatever

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tends to keep up good order in any part, tends to the preſervation of order throughout the whole. Whence the ſame reaſon may convince us that by fulfilling our duty as members of the diſtrict wherein we are placed, we ſhall effectually perform our part as citizens of the world.

For as in every well-policied kingdom, the inhabitant who conſults the good of his own pariſh, the profeſſor, the trader, the ſhopkeeper, the artificer, who performs the functions of his ſeveral calling, contributes a ſhare towards the good of the kingdom; and as the ſchoolboy, who conforms to his maſter's rules, provides himſelf with qualities conducive to his better living when he comes out into the world: ſo if we ſteadily purſue the intereſts of our fellow-creatures with whom we have a viſible intercourſe, and our own temporal intereſts ſo far as are conſiſtent with the former; we ſhall infallibly, tho' unwittingly, perform all the ſervices we are capable of to our elder brethren of the purely ſpiritual kind, and fall into the meaſures moſt beneficial to our ſpiritual body, as rendering it moſt capable of activity and enjoyment.

10. Thus the temporal intereſts of mankind appear to be the magnetic needle conſtantly pointing to our polar ſtar, and by this we ought to ſteer our courſe in the voyage of life: for this will not only render our voyage agreeable, but will prove our ſafeſt conductor to the country whereto

whereto we are bound. There may be doctrines whoſe uſe is not obviouſly apparent, and will lay ourſelves, and even the community, under ſome temporary inconvenieneies; but whatever neceſſarily introduces diſorder and diſquiet into our own minds, or tends to the detriment of mankind in general, we may boldly condemn as ſpurious.

If any very righteous perſon ſhall charge me with making religion ſubſervient only to temporal intereſt, the charge is unjuſt: for I have endeavoured all along to ſhow that it promotes other intereſts beſide, far more extenſive than perhaps he is aware of; but it promotes this likewiſe at the ſame time. If he thinks it an undervaluing of religion, to ſuppoſe it enjoining nothing that has not a reference to this world: let him conſider whether he eſteems it for the honour of religion, that any precept ſhould be found in it, which being generally practiſed, would not make the condition of human life better; or any ſentiment of genuine piety, which duly inculcated, would not add to our tranquility and ſolace of mind. For when I talk of temporal intereſt, I do not confine my thoughts to thoſe external advantages uſually engroſſing the name. If therefore what is genuine, naturally produces theſe effects, what has a contrary tendency, however ſpecious it may appear, can carry the form only without the ſubſtance of religion.

Therefore

Therefore we may now, as has been done before by a better authority, compare the kingdom of heaven, as erected in the hearts of men, to a grain of muſtard; which, though among the ſmalleſt of ſeeds, grows up into a plant in whoſe branches the birds of the air may harbour. For though its immediate operation extend no further than to make us ſatisfied with the univerſe we live in, to raiſe us out of ourſelves and inſpire us with an honeſt zeal for the good of mankind: yet this little principle wherever taking ſtrong root, caſts an influence upon all our actions and ſentiments, making life more chearful and alleviating the burthens of it; and if univerſally prevailing, would baniſh wars, injuries, greedineſs, and indolence, and reſtore a paradiſe upon earth. But the misfortune is, that the ordinary narrowneſs of our views makes the object of this principle difficult to be comprehended: for you can no ſooner mention private intereſt, than you are thought to ſpeak of ſome advancement in fortune, credit or ſtation; nor of public, than you convey the idea of commerce, riches or ſtrength of the nation. Whereas true intereſt is the ſame with happineſs, which does not derive from any ſingle ſource, but muſt be ſupplied by a multitude of little rills: which we comprize, with Mr Pope, under three general articles, health, peace and competence.

11. I ſhall begin with Competence, as being that which ſtarts up firſt in the imagination of moſt people when turning their thoughts upon intereſt. But as I make ſo few general articles, I muſt extend them beyond their ordinary ſignification, that they may have room to contain all the particulars wanted to be ranged under them: therefore I do not reſtrain competence to a ſufficiency of fortune, but comprehend under it all the externals contributing to the preſervation and enjoyment of life. For what avails it for a man to have his pockets full of gold, if he be placed in ſome deſolate ſpot where no conveniencies are to be had either for love or money? What comfort can he find in perpetual ſolitude, though with all the materials of pleaſure ſtored plentifully about him? or what enjoyment can he have of his riches or his neighbours, while continually liable to the controul of ſome imperious maſter? So that beſides money, there are opportunities of laying it properly out: beſides meats and drinks, houſe room and furniture, there are ſociety and liberty among the ingredients requiſite for making up a competence.

And for the community, though riches, ſtrength and law, be the main pillars of ſecurity and liberty, nevertheleſs the arts, ſciences, manners, manufactures, commodities and materials of innocent amuſement, go to compleat the competence of a nation. Therefore let every man

man take that part in the public ſervice belonging to him. The great men watch over the main pillars, to preſerve them from decay or damage: and it is their buſineſs to take care that in their hurry of ſhoving away one another from the work, they do not ſhove the pillar itſelf. But this is not the taſk for perſons of private ſtation, who have no ſkill in maſonry, nor means of acquiring any: for they may thrum over Britons, North-Britons and Monitors from morning to night, without being ever the wiſer. Therefore if they would ſtudy to mend ſomething in their family, their acquaintance or their neighbourhood, this would be the moſt effectual method in their power towards mending the affairs of the nation.

But it is a common miſtake to imagine that, by continually adding to ſome particular branch of competence, we ſhall always render it more compleat: for competence is as much deſtroyed by redundancy as by deficiency. A multitude of goods greater than one can uſe, is a burthen and an incumbrance rather than a benefit: an acquaintance may be too numerous as well as too narrow; and a total exemption from check and controul often betrays into irretrievable miſchiefs. For as perfection in the human body conſiſts in the apt proportion of its parts; ſo our ſtock of externals cannot encreaſe exorbitantly in one part without falling defective in ſome other: wherefore due regard muſt be had

had to all the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life. The abſolute neceſſaries of nature, without which life and health could not be ſupported, are few: but education, cuſtom, habit and faſhion, create many neceſſaries which had no exiſtence in nature. However a man may ſtand diſpoſed in himſelf, the decent compliance with the world will draw ſome of theſe neceſſities upon him: but it is prudent to multiply them as little as poſſible, becauſe we ſhall run the hazard of multiplying wants in the ſame proportion. Therefore, as I have obſerved in a former place, that deſire is gratified alike, either by procuring the objects it affects, or by turning it upon objects we have ready at hand ſo in this caſe it behoves us to examine upon every occaſion, whether is the more feaſible and eligible method, to provide the neceſſaries we want, or to make them none by learning to do without them.

But were the world ever ſo well ſupplied with neceſſaries, and diveſted of all other wants than thoſe they could eaſily ſatisfy, ſtill they would not have a ſufficient ſpur to their activity, nor reliſh to make their hours paſs ſmoothly, if they had nothing elſe beſides neceſſaries to think on: therefore ſomething muſt be done for convenience, engagement and entertainment. For it is the arts and embelliſhments of life that make the difference between civilized and ſavage, that keep induſtry awake, prevent the growth

of evil habits nouriſhed by idleneſs; that cement ſociety by making men needful and helpful to one another; that whet and ſtrengthen the faculties for works of greateſt neceſſity and importance. If they are often purſued too ſtrongly, it is the exceſs alone that vitiates the purſuit: for what tends only to promote chearfulneſs, eaſe and amuſement, if it draw no bad conſequences nor interrupt any more valuable work, is a mite added to the ſum of happineſs.

Nor is it impoſſible they may add more than the mite, for when we reflect on the conſtitution of our corporeal and mental organs requiring recreation and diverſion, and the natural utter incapacity of ſome perſons for weighty undertakings; we may rationally preſume that God, who carries both worlds in view and has more purpoſes than one in his diſpenſations, has made our innocent amuſements productive of important uſes unknown and undiſcernable to us. For it had been eaſy for him to have made us all ſerious and ſolemn creatures, capable of inceſſant labour and intenſe thought, without ear for muſic, without eye for neatneſs, elegance or beauty, without taſte for building or gardening, and without reliſh for diverſion; if he had judged it for the benefit of his creation.

12. The next article, Health, I muſt likewiſe take in a larger latitude than ordinarily given it: comprizing not only what relates to the prevention of diſeaſes, and keeping the body

clear

clear of foulneſs, but alſo the bringing the limbs, organs, faculties and other parts of our frame, into ſuch ſtate wherein they may beſt perform the ſervices we ſhall require of them. This cannot be denied a matter of great importance: for what ſignifies competence to a diſtempered body that can receive no enjoyment, or an unexperienced mind that knows not how to reap the proper advantages from it.

To this article belong the cares of nurture and education, thoſe exerciſes and inſtructions that teach the management of the limbs or give expertneſs in marſhalling the thoughts, and in general whatever can be called learning or accompliſhment. Nor muſt we leave out the virtues and moral ſenſes, the knowledge of men and things, the acquiring taſtes, deſires and habits, which may contribute to our uſe and entertainment, and the quickening our activity ſo as that it may ſupport us under labour when neceſſary, and carry us through our ordinary tranſactions with eaſe, readineſs and alacrity. For he cannot be reckoned ſound and healthful throughout, who has contracted vicious appetites, turbulent paſſions, or inconvenient habits; whoſe faculties are weakened, inexpert to perform their functions, or ill ſupplied with their proper nouriſhment; or whoſe active powers are ſtiffned by the ſcurvy of idleneſs.

But as we have not all the ſame part to act in life, this health is relative; that being compleat

pleat in one man, which would prove defective in another. The weaver wants not the ſturdineſs and intrepidity of the ſoldier: nor does the latter want the nice finger of the muſician, nor variegated imagination of the poet. Delicacy and elegance would do hurt to the porter: and his endurance of naſtineſs and coarſe living might be improper for the nobleman. Wherefore let us conſider ſituations and circumſtances: and let each man lay in the particular ſtock of health and vigour moſt ſuitable to his conſtitution, fitteſt for his own ſervices and thoſe he owes to others with whom he has intercourſe. Yet there is one branch of health which, like the lively ſmooth beatings of the pulſe, ſuits well with all conditions: an alert ſpirit, ready to make the proper uſe of every preſent occaſion, ſo that there may remain no vacant hours unſupplied either by buſineſs or diverſion; proceeding without trepidation or anxiety, yet without intermiſſion or ſluggiſhneſs. Sometimes an entire relaxation is neceſſary, and ſo is ſleep; but where there is this alertneſs in the conſtitution, neither will be ſuffered to ſteal away any more of our time than we find requiſite for our refreſhment.

But an ill habit whether of body or mind is not to be rectified, nor dexterity of any kind in either to be gotten, preſently: for preparations are to be made, many externals provided, to help on the acquiſition, and gradations paſſed

through to render it compleat. So that the article of health, in this comprehenſive ſignification, will take up much of our thoughts and induſtry to eſtabliſh it in ourſelves and contribute towards perfecting it in the community, ſo far as our little power and opportunities extend. And to gain any ſucceſs, we muſt proceed with diſcretion as well as reſolution, driving the nail that will go, regarding rather what is feaſible than what is deſirable, looking round on all ſides to obſerve remote conſequences, learning how to mingle ſteadineſs with compliance, becoming all things to all men, humouring times and companies, yet without being ever compelled or ſeduced to act againſt our judgment.

13. The third article, Peace, relates to the tranquillity and ſolace of the mind: this is the moſt important of the three, and indeed the other two are valuable only as they contribute to this. For externals will ſet the mind at peace for a while, when newly acquired or near in expectation: and ſo will an advancement in any ſcience or dexterity, a new diſcovery, a curioſity, a diverſion, or indulgence of appetite. But theſe are only caſual and temporary expedients, to be had juſt when luck befriends us, ſoothing for the preſent and often drawing on a greater diſquietude. The only ſecure and durable peace the mind can expect, muſt come from her own fund: when ſhe is ſtored with

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ſentiments continually prompting to a right courſe of behaviour, ſatisfied with her own actions, and apt to content herſelf with whatever befals her.

Some have placed happineſs ſolely in this rectitute of temper, deſpiſing externals and endowments of body or mind, as matters of meer indifference: but we cannot go ſo far, for rectitude ſeems too airy to ſtand without ſome more ſolid ground. Nothing were right unleſs ſomething elſe were valuable which it is right to purſue: even juſtice could have no rectitude, if there were no goodneſs in property which it tends to preſerve. And though the mind may feel ſatisfaction in the rectitude of her deeds without view to conſequences, yet this is a tranſlated ſatisfaction, which muſt wear away unleſs renewed from time to time by experience of the conſequences.

Nevertheleſs it muſt be acknowledged that much of the good to be received from other things depends upon the inward turn and diſpoſition, and that this will ſometimes enſure peace when all other ſources fail. For what avails an abundance of goods and poſſeſſions, an exuberance of health, quickneſs of parts and ſtore of accompliſhments, if the mind be reſtleſs within herſelf, always hankering after what ſhe has not rather than uſing and enjoying what ſhe has? on the contrary, diſtreſs, diſeaſe and incapacity, become heavier or lighter burthens in propor-

tion to the firmneſs of mind there is to ſupport them: and perhaps were this firmneſs compleat, it muſt render the weightieſt of them eaſy, for there is always ſomething to be done towards making our condition better; and till this can be atchieved, the mind may find ſolace from the endeavours ſhe uſes in advancing towards it. But as ſuch perfect ſoundneſs, proof againſt all accidents that can intervene, is ſcarce attainable in practiſe, it behoves us to provide againſt the weakneſs of human nature, and if poſſible avoid putting it to trials greater than it can bear.

Whence it becomes a branch of neceſſary prudence to endeavour placing ourſelves in the ſituation, and to take up the employments, beſt ſuited to our taſte and genius; for therein we ſhall be likely to paſs our time comfortably, and to do our work moſt ſucceſsfully: as likewiſe to avoid having much intercourſe with perſons of odd and difficult characters, enough to ruffle a philoſopher, or whoſe ways and humours are greatly diſcordant from our own; eſpecially in thoſe connections which are likely to be of long continuance and cannot be broken off whenever we will. But ſince we have not always our choice in theſe particulars, there is the more reaſon to provide a reſource within ourſelves by a robuſtneſs and ſerenity of mind, not eaſy to be thrown off the hinges by unfavourable accidents. Which temper is not to be

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gained by a ſingle effort how ſtrenuous ſoever; for it is a habit and muſt be nouriſhed up gradually by vigilance and conſtant exerciſe; yet every ſingle effort is a help towards the growth of the habit, and the contracting it in little matters renders it more eaſy to be contracted in greater.

Therefore no opportunity is to be loſt or overlooked for rendering peace habitual to the mind by checking every little motion to fretfulneſs or peeviſhneſs, averſeneſs to trouble, apprehenſion of danger, regret at a loſs, vexation for a diſappointment, impatience for a pleaſure, hurry in an undertaking, or anxiety under a ſuſpenſe that riſes in the breaſt: nor ought any thing practicable to be omitted for ſpreading peace amongſt other people, whether by exhortation, advice, example, exclamation, humour, ridicule, or whatever method is moſt ſuitable to the occaſion. But tho' ſomething may be done towards quieting the mind by dint of reſolution, yet we ſhall ſucceed more effectually if we can get ſome ſoothing proſpect to aſſiſt us: for preſent uneaſineſs cannot always he aſſuaged unleſs by thoughts of abſent good. Therefore the ground and never-failing ſource of peace is, Hope, which ariſes from an impartial contemplation of nature: for if we ſurvey it through falſe glaſſes, ſo as to perſuade ourſelves that men are born enemies to one another, and that the condition of creatures, a very few excepted, is

wretched and deſpicable; this will be more likely to fill us with melancholy and horror than with comfort: but a candid and benevolent temper will diſcover ſo many advantages and enjoyments every where as to give us a cheerful idea of the world we live in.

Yet this idea cannot have its full effect without religion, which alone can enſure us a ſhare in the ſtream of bounty that flows copiouſly on all ſides, and opens a much larger and richer proſpect into the inviſible world than this narrow earth can afford. Nevertheleſs care muſt be taken not to embrace every thing haſtily that carries the appearance of Religion: for many by an unjudicious earneſtneſs to become religious, have filled themſelves with doubts and deſpondencies, deſtroyed their own peace, entertained an unfavourable opinion as well of their fellow-creatures as of the creation, and thought narrowly and unworthily of their creator. Wherefore it is of the utmoſt importance, and deſerves our principal attention, to cultivate juſt ſentiments of him, and as he wants not our adoration nor our ſervices, but has vouchſafed ſo much knowledge of himſelf as he judges needful, and given us religion for our benefit; we may be ſure that is the trueſt which tends moſt to preſerve our minds in a ſteady tenour, to draw us out of hurtful courſes, and make us profitable to one another.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Eſoterics and Exoterics.

RELIGION, although juſtly ſtiled the ſervice of God, becauſe then only having the true and real value when performed in obedience to his Will, yet was not given to ſerve himſelf, but his creatures: therefore muſt be adapted to their needs and their natures, in order to become ſerviceable to them. But human nature being very various among people and individuals according to their capacities, endowments or caſts of imagination; their diverſity of characters requires a different management to ſerve them effectually. And you may as well think of ſetting out a meaſure of cloaths that ſhall fit every body, as of drawing up a compleat ſyſtem of Religion accommodated to the uſes of all mankind.

Much diſcourſe has paſſed in the world upon uniformity, and indeed a uniformity of profeſſion were a deſirable thing, as preventing diſcordance among mankind, and a contempt of Religion in in general. For religious feuds being the moſt miſchievous and rancorous of any, no care can be too great to avoid them. Nor is any thing more contrary to the grand purpoſe of Religion, the general good, than for men to perſuade themſelves they do God ſervice in vexing and ill-

treating one another: or more injurious to his glory, than to imagine him entertaining a hatred and enmity againſt his creatures. And the bulk of mankind, unable to ſtrike out any thing of themſelves, would have no reſtraint upon their paſſions, no awe or dependance, or perhaps no thought of an inviſible Power governing both worlds, if they were not let into it by cuſtom and authority: but authority and cuſtom have the ſtronger influence the more generally they are complied with.

Therefore it is expedient and neceſſary to have ſome form of doctrine generally agreed to, for preſerving peace and a regard to futurity among the people. And the more conciſe and ſimple this form can be contrived, the better; becauſe more comprehenſive, as being eaſier accommodated to the diverſity of characters. But no eſtabliſhed form can contain the whole of every man's opinions, for unleſs he ſtrikes out ſomething of his own from what has been taught him, he will make very little proficiency in Religion: and the ſame expreſſions convey very different ideas to a number of hearers; ſo that it is not to be concluded that we have all exactly the ſame ſentiments, becauſe we all join in the ſame form of words.

How ſhort is the firſt article of our creed? I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth. Yet how various are our conceptions of the ſupreme Being? ſome conceive him

him governed by human affections, ſuch as anger, hatred, deſire of honour, favour, complacence to thoſe who reſemble him; abſolutely uncertain of the turns of free will, unable to make his work perfect, but perpetually interpoſing to mend what falls out amiſs, hurt by offences, which he cannot remit without an amends made him in value. Others believe him exempt from paſſion of all kinds, acting invariably by reaſon, juſt ſuch as ours only not liable to error and ſomewhat better informed as having a larger ſcene to contemplate, proceeding upon the rectitude reſulting from a nature of things which was not of his own production. Others again hold him the author of reaſon itſelf, of qualities, forms and eſſences as well as of ſubſtances, leaving nothing to chance or contingency, able to provide adequate cauſes for bringing all his purpoſes to bear, never interpoſing on ſudden emergencies from an unforeſeen neceſſity, but in conſequence of his own predetermination to interpoſe.

Then for the epithet Almighty, if any one would ſee what multitude of reflections that alone gives ſcope to, let him read over doctor Barrow's long ſermon upon the Greek word Pantocratoor. Seneca ſuppoſed the elements uncreated, and gave that for the reaſon why the world was not better made, becauſe ſome of the elements being ſluggiſh and untractable, could not be brought into a compleater form: yet he allowed

lowed that God has made as good a world as his materials were capable of. So he would not have ſcrupled joining with us in repeating, Maker of heaven and earth. And though now we all believe the materials created by the ſame hand that worked them up into a regular ſyſtem, yet we are not ſo unanimous with reſpect to the time. It is the common opinion, I ſuppoſe, that they were created juſt when wanted for the uſes we ſee them put to: but many learned and pious men have holden them exiſtent; and perhaps employed in other uſes, before the Moſaic creation; much more that the glorious Sun and immeaſurably diſtant ſtars were above a week older than Adam.

How ſhall we expound heaven ſo as to compaſs a uniformity of ſentiments? The common people place it in the atmoſphere: whence the expreſſions of the birds of heaven, the dews of heaven, and the heavens opening when it lightens. Some may begin it juſt above the atmoſphere: others perhaps remove it beyond the ſtarry ſphere and viſible univerſe. But when we reflect on the earth's motion in her annual orbit, we ſhall find that was heaven yeſterday which is earth to-day, and the ſpace contained in the room I now ſit in will be part of heaven to-morrow. Some perhaps may imagine that heaven is not local, but it is our immerſion into body that excludes us from thence: ſo that if all our material

terial bars could be burſten aſunder, we ſhould inſtantly find ourſelves in heaven without removing from our places.

Thus a perfect uniformity of ſentiment is neither practicable nor needful: it is enough that we agree together ſo far as that we may act in concert upon the common occaſions of life, and not diſturb one another in our religious exerciſes. Therefore our laws have wiſely provided for ſuch a uniformity of profeſſion as is requiſite to maintain order and good harmony, and keep alive a ſenſe of religion in all parts of the community; giving full liberty and indulgence to any diverſity of opinions that does not tend to invalidate thoſe proviſions, and unſettle the minds of the people.

2. Yet is this liberty to be uſed cautiouſly: for ſpeculative opinions may have an influence upon practical, and one man's ſpeculations, though innocent and ſalutary to himſelf, may cauſe diſquietude and do miſchief in the mind of another, who perhaps will draw inferences from them the author never intended nor would think conſequential, tending to overthrow ſome eſtabliſhed tenet, or even ſubverſive of religion and good manners. For in every ſcience, thoſe who make it their buſineſs to dive into the depths of it, find a very different ſcene of things from thoſe who take only ſo much as is requiſite for common uſe: and ſuch as have beſtowed much thought upon the

the foundations of right and wrong, diſcover many contrarieties and abſurdities in the popular notions; as on the other hand their refinements appear unintelligible and abſurd to the generality. Therefore it behoves every man to regard not only what is rational, conſiſtent and wholeſome to himſelf, but what will continue ſo when thrown into a diverſly moulded imagination: reſerving the former for his private uſe, or for thoſe of a ſimilar caſt, but dealing out the latter only to all comers.

Hence the ſo noted diſtinction among philoſophers of their eſoteric and exoteric doctrines, the one to be truſted only with adepts, the other communicated to the vulgar: or if they did ſometimes venture the former in a mixed audience, they couched them under ſuch enigmatical and myſterious terms that nobody could tell what to make of them without the ſecret enigmatical key. But this reſerve of theirs has been commonly placed in a wrong light; as if proceeding from a vain and niggardly temper, fond of hoarding up their treaſures for themſelves and thinking any worthleſs ſcraps good enough for the vulgar. Nor has the word Vulgar contributed a little towards encouraging this notion, as ſignifying with us a perſon of mean underſtanding, little knowledge or accompliſhment: ſo that Adept is regarded as a title of honour and Vulgar as a word of reproach. Whereas in former times the terms were relative to ſome

art or ſcience or profeſſion, reſpectively comprizing all who were or were not maſters therein: ſo that the philoſopher himſelf was among the vulgar with regard to commerce, maſonry, navigation, or other buſineſs he did not underſtand, and acknowledged ſuch as were ſkilful in each profeſſion for adepts.

3. Contempt and jealouſy are the natural growth of little minds: and pretenders to a knowledge they have not, muſt affect profoundneſs and myſtery in order to keep the ſecret of thoſe artifices they employ for getting a falſe reputation, which would vaniſh as ſoon as ſeen through. But meekneſs, candour, openneſs of temper and unreſerved benignity, are characteriſtics of the true philoſopher. He aims at genuine happineſs, not at any ſpacious glare of it as ſeen through the optics of paſſion or fancy. He purſues knowledge for the uſe, not the credit of it, and deſires reputation no further than as it may gain him better attention and thereby enable him to do better ſervice. He chooſes his ſcience, not as the moſt noble and moſt elevated above all others, but as moſt ſuited to his particular genius and circumſtances in life. For he knows the buſineſs of the world cannot be carried on without many heads variouſly qualified, and it behoves each labourer to take that part of the work for which nature and fortune have peculiarly adapted him: that being the moſt noble and becoming to every one, wherein he

he may proceed with greateſt profit to the community. He ſees that active profeſſions are more neceſſary to the public well-being than ſpeculative, and that many of them require as great acuteneſs of parts, ſoundneſs of judgment, and as piercing ſagacity, as the depths of philoſophy.

Though his thoughts are continually raiſed up to objects above the common obſervance, he does not think himſelf higher in merit or accompliſhment upon that account. For as a ſailor ordered up the main maſt top to deſcry ſhips or clouds or promontories at a diſtance, tho' higher in ſituation, is not higher in rank and eminence than the crew below, who take their meaſures according to his ſignals: ſo he conſiders himſelf as placed upon ſome watch tower, there to ſit a careful ſpectator of the earth with its inhabitants, their ways, natures, and all that paſſes therein, and the heavens with all their glories; only to draw notices from thence for the ſervice of his fellow-labourers, buſied in employments below as uſeful and as laudable.

But he knows that in all profeſſions there are certain technical terms and technical trains of thinking unintelligible to thoſe who are not converſant in the buſineſs, though perhaps of ſuperiour underſtandings and more extenſive knowledge. Therefore he communicates his notices where he judges they will be underſtood: for he eſteems nothing too good for any body,

but

but if he witholds his lights from any, it is not owing to a ſupercilious opinion of their unworthineſs, but to their inability to receive them; which inability he does not attribute to a dullneſs of apprehenſion, or any other defect that might leſſen them in his eſtimation, but to a want of the preparation neceſſary for that particular purpoſe.

4. Nor is he more prone to monopolize than to deſpiſe; for what valuables he poſſeſſes are of a nature to be imparted without diminiſhing the ſtock of the owner. Neither does he grudge any perſon whatever benefit he can do him; but he knows that one man's meat may prove another man's poiſon, and it would be no benefit to give another what muſt diſagree with him. So he changes or diſguiſes his potions, not with intention to deceive, but to render them innocent and ſalubrious. For he ſtudies to make the good he does as extenſive as poſſible, which he knows cannot be effected without paying as much regard to conſtitutions as to the nature of the remedies. He finds the current language among mankind variable and uncertain, their words changing colours when tranſported into other phraſes, and their expreſſions variouſly underſtood according to the occaſion. So he is forced to form a language of his own, the terms whereof may be ſteady, ſo as not to entangle his thoughts in equivocations, but capable of being conſtructed into a compact and regular

ſyſtem

ſyſtem, from whence his occaſional reaſonings may ſpring like branches growing from a tree.

As he purſues knowledge to its foundations, it appears there in a different form from what it does upon the ſurface, and leads him into reflections unfamiliar to common comprehenſion, becauſe generally unheeded as being uſeleſs in common life. For the rules of action often take a different caſt from the reaſons giving them birth; and like a winding road, ſeem to carry the traveller quite away from the point whereto they will conduct at laſt. Therefore he has one ſet of doctrines for his private uſe, and another for his neighbours: not that they vary in ſubſtance, for the drift of both is to infuſe as pure conſiſtent and ſublime notions of the Deity as poſſible, to bring the mind ſatisfied with herſelf, to direct and animate the receiver in fulfilling the ſocial and prudential duties of his ſtation; but the one is a tranſlation of the other into the vulgar language.

For if he were to deliver his ſentiments in his own, he would be ſo far from dealing honeſtly with his hearers that he would prevaricate and deceive them egregiouſly, by conveying ideas the moſt foreign to his real thoughts. If he talked of intereſt, they would underſtand him of getting money or preferment: if he recommended gratification, they would think only of the preſent fancy ſtarting up in their heads: if he aſſerted God to be totally exempt from paſſion

ſion or affection, they would imagine there could be neither favour nor vengeance, neither reward nor puniſhment: if he repreſented him incapable of receiving pleaſure or vexation from any thing we do, they would ſuppoſe it all one in what manner we behave, all actions being beheld with equal indifference by the all-ſeeing eye. Therefore to convey his real ſentiments he muſt diſguiſe and even contradict them, the idioms of the two languages being ſo widely different, that to keep the ſpirit of the original, he muſt ſometimes expreſs himſelf directly oppoſite to the articles of his own creed.

5. And the better to ſatisfy the world with their being dealt with after this manner, we think it probable he will practiſe the ſame honeſt artifice upon himſelf. For he cannot fail of knowing he is only ſenſitive-rational: ſo whatever uſe he may make of his underſtanding in ſpeculation, he muſt not expect to live by reaſon; but his conduct will be guided by ſuch rules and opinions as he has ſtored up in his imagination. But imagination will throw her own clumſy ſhapes and groſs colourings upon whatever is depoſited with her: nor can ſhe contain any great lengths of refinement without loſing them among the ſenſible objects wherewith ſhe is continually converſant. Therefore he has one caſt of mind for the cloſet, and another to ſerve him for practiſe when he enters

into the buſy world, accommodated to the ſcenes he expects to meet with there.

Your beginners in ſcience, fond of a new diſcovery, cannot lay it aſide upon occaſion; ſo they mingle ſubtilties among their common affairs, and groſs ideas among their meditations; which cauſes a confuſion and aukwardneſs in both. But the perfection of art lies in ſeparating them diſtinctly: wherein whoever has attained a competent proficiency, will have his particular ranges, and ſuch command over his thoughts as to turn them at any time into the reaſonable train. For upon ordinary occurrencies he will find it neceſſary to employ the miniſtry of the ſenſes, and take the judgements they have been habituated to make: in his intercourſe among other people, the force of ſympathy will inſenſibly aſſimilate his conceptions to theirs; or if he could reſiſt this force, it would only deſtroy the eaſe, the freedom and the mutual benefit of that intercourſe.

Theſe circumſtances make it often neceſſary for us to conceive of things otherwiſe than we know them to be: we know the ſun ſtands ſtill, and the earth rolls round him with inconceivable rapidity; yet to think of the ſtately fabrics, the ſpacious cities, the ſeated mountains, the brimming ocean, and the univerſal quieſcence of a ſtill evening, ruſhing forward with ſuch inceſſant impetuoſity, is an idea too unwieldy for our imagination. We know the fire only diſſipates,

but does not deſtroy: yet we currently talk of its drying up, conſuming and deſtroying. We hold matter inert and ſenſeleſs, but aſcribe force to ſtorms and inundations, activity to ſpirituous liquors and drugs, inclemency to ſeaſons, kindlineſs to dews, benignity to vernal gleams, and give bodies other powers and affections belonging to ourſelves. Nor can we avoid debaſing even the divine eſſence by figurative expreſſions, making it tenable in our imagination: as when we ſpeak of the hand, the finger, the eye, the voice of God, apprehend him pleaſed or grieved, angry, compaſſionate or jealous, and acting in a manner whereinto we ourſelves are led by human paſſions.

Such then being the conſtitution of human nature, our profeſſor will conform his meaſures accordingly, nor try to conduct his ordinary behaviour by the ſublimities of reaſon, which would be a fruitleſs attempt. He will only employ theſe at convenient hours to ſtore his imagination with ſuch opinions, maxims, habits, moral ſenſes, deſires and conceptions, as may ſerve him for daily uſe. And he will follow the golden rule of doing to others as he does to himſelf, endeavouring to infuſe them with ſuch ſentiments as may prove uſeful and practicable, hiding from them whatever might invalidate or miſlead the influence of thoſe ſentiments, not aiming to make philoſophers of all the world, but reaſonable creatures, actuated by ſuch prin-

ciples as philoſophy would recommend. Nor will he neglect to watch over the whole family of imagination, as well in his own breaſt as elſewhere; in order to correct whatever has run amiſs, and alter whatever a variation of circumſtances has rendered inexpedient.

6. In humble imitation of this model, I ſhould be glad to make the proper ſeparation between the theoretic and practical doctrines: how well I have managed the point with reſpect to my private convenience, relates to myſelf alone, nor does it concern any body elſe. And with reſpect to the public convenience, the times are altered ſince our forefathers uſed to ſelect their adepts and their vulgar for their ſeveral lectures: for the method of lectures is now grown obſolete, nor, were it not, have I either lungs or fluency for the taſk. For I am not entitled to talk by myſelf without contradiction in the regular way, and for the irregular of field-preaching I have no opinion, nor yet the talents requiſite to ſucceed: for it is the marvellous, the ſurprizing, the vehement and the poſitive, that draw crouded mobs about the gifted preacher; whereas I pretend to no gifts, other than are beſtowed in common among all who are willing to improve them carefully. So I can only lay out my thoughts in writing, and leave it to chance to diſpoſe of them among all ſorts of people, who may fancy they ſhall find ſomething to like or diſlike in them, for curioſity will ſometimes

ſhoot

ſhoot as vigorouſly out of the latter expectation as the former.

Since then I am confined to this only method, I may hope to find excuſe for the inconveniencies unavoidably attending it, and that my readers will make the ſeparation it was not in my power to compleat. For either I muſt have omitted what appeared to me neceſſary to ſatisfy the curious, or muſt venture ſomething unfit for the uſes of him who deſires only practical knowledge. Therefore whoever ſhall find me advancing any thing hurtful to Religion or good manners, let him paſs it over as not intended for him, nor what I wiſh might prevail upon him, and do me the juſtice to believe I did not diſcern its tendency. For we have not all the ſame ſagacity and penetration, and he may reſt perſuaded that if I had had his lights and judgment to have pointed out the evil conſequences, I ſhould not only have omitted but rejected it. For I look upon Religion and reaſon as the gifts of God, whoſe characteriſtic being goodneſs, they muſt be beneficial to be genuine: therefore whatever proves detrimental to mankind, carries in that circumſtance an evidence of its being falſe and ſpurious. Nor have I carelefly thrown out every thing at random, but on the contrary have ſuppreſſed ſome ſpeculations that ſeemed to me innocent and well grounded, being apprehenſive they might give offence: ſo that I may claim ſome of the merit aſcribed

by Roſcommon to the verſifying tribe, when he ſays, Poets loſe half the praiſe they might have got, were it but known what they diſcreetly blot.

As to what eſoterics I have vented, ſuch as the foundation of moral duties upon ſelf-intereſt; the corporeity of mental organs; the homogeneity of created ſpirits; the rational faculty being a ſecondary property reſulting from the compoſition of ſpirit with a fine organization; the dependence of perception, judgement and free action, upon poſitions or motions in particles of matter; the univerſal plan of Providence, comprizing all events and leaving no room for contingency; the Attribute of Equity, void of favour, partiality or prædilection; the equality of fortunes among ſpiritual ſubſtances; the limited duration of puniſhment; its exact diſtribution brought about by natural cauſes, without needing the formality of a judgement; the balancing periods; the plenitude of the Univerſe; the various orders of Beings; their intimate commixture; their free-agency, yet ſo directed as not to diſturb the municipal laws belonging to each other; their mutual connection of intereſts; their endeavours for the benefit of their own ſpecies contributing to maintain the general good; and ſuch like. Theſe ſeemed neceſſary to compleat a regular ſyſtem, to be worked up from the foundations of experience and reaſon into a compact

pact uniform fabric; wherein there might be nothing looſe, incongruous or unſupported, to offend the penetrating eye of the ſpeculative. And I have been ſolicitous all along to do what in me lay to prevent any bad tincture they might caſt upon the exoterics calculated for popular uſe: which to my thinking may with proper management be made to grow more healthy from them, although differing in taſte and appearance. For it is no uncommon thing for fruits to have qualities oppoſite to thoſe of the tree that bore them: but we muſt cultivate the tree, though we need only gather the fruit for our eating.

7. But the tree being valuable only for the fruit, it becomes a prudent gardener to check the luxuriancy of its branches, to engraff, to prune, to diſtribute and nail the twigs; and in general to cultivate it in ſuch manner as that it may yield the moſt plentiful and goodlieſt produce. Or to change the metaphor, we may conſider the philoſopher as a wholeſale trader, importing the principles of reaſon and conduct from all quarters of nature where he can ſettle a correſpondence. If you go to him for the ſupply of your family, he cannot accommodate you: for he deals only in tons and hogſheads, or quantities larger than you will know what to do with. Beſides that your purchaſe would conſiſt partly of caſk and packing, which muſt encumber your houſe; and contains a

mixture of ſtalk and huſk and rubbiſh, which would require a great deal of ſkill and trouble in the picking. Or it may be he will ſhew you piles of plank or bars or ingots, good for no ſervice upon earth until properly manufactured. So it is his buſineſs to ſupply the retailer who may work up his materials into tools and utenſils, neceſſary for the artificer and the private houſekeeper: or pick and ſort and parcel out his wares, and mingle them in ſuch compoſitions as that you ſhall ſcarce know the ingredients, yet ſhall find them fit for your immediate conſumption.

But it being no unprecedented thing for the gardener to carry his own fruit to market, nor for the wholeſale dealer to have a ſeparate ſhop wherein he carries on the retail buſineſs: why may not I be indulged in the like attempt, and permitted to try how the eſoterics will look when manufactured in the exoterical form. This is the more commendable enterprize, becauſe great miſtakes and abſurdities have been committed in the manufactory: ſo that whatever be the ſucceſs, the artizans are obliged to me for my good will and endeavours to improve and facilitate the art. Therefore ſince I have the benefit of the retailer as well as the conſumer in view, I cannot wholly lay aſide the exerciſe of the eſoteric branch, even while at work upon the exoterics: becauſe I would willingly ſhew how both may be reconciled ſo as to

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aſſiſt and co-operate with each other, as ſpringing originally from the ſame root, and conducing ultimately to the ſame purpoſe.

For to proceed ſecurely either way, we muſt proceed upon our experience in the nature of things: but the thing that it concerns us neareſt to ſtudy is man himſelf, whoſe nature we are principally to regard, and ſhape our conduct accordingly in the meaſures we take for his benefit. We have already had chapters upon Imagination and Underſtanding, Conviction and Perſuaſion, Knowledge and Conception: wherein we have endeavoured to explain the diſtinction between Reaſon and Apprehenſion, to ſhew that the one cannot always follow cloſe upon the other; and that moſt men conſtantly, and all men generally, are guided in their motions by the latter. We have ſeen that the virtues themſelves do not become perfect until they grow into deſires, riſing ſpontaneouſly without needing the help of reaſon to recommend them. Therefore it is of the utmoſt importance to have a well ordered imagination, to lay in ſuch ſtores there as it can receive, and as may invigorate and direct our conduct: for without this, our knowledge cannot be practical, at leaſt ſo as to ſerve us upon occaſions wherein we ſhall need it the moſt.

To have the full uſe of our underſtanding, the body muſt be free from pain and diſorder, the ſpirits alert, the mind quiet and ſerene, and nothing

nothing external to ruffle or diſturb us: but in this ſituation there is no difficulty how to behave. The ſeaſons moſt needful to provide againſt are thoſe of hurry and buſineſs, ſudden emergencies, alluring pleaſures, turbulent paſſions, dangers, diſtreſſes, afflictions, and vexations: when we cannot ſtrike out new lights, nor purſue lengths of meditation, but muſt avail ourſelves of ſuch ideas as ſhall ſtart up ſpontaneouſly to the thought. Therefore when leiſure permits and opportunity favours, it behoves us to examine what reaſon would recommend in all circumſtances we may be likely to fall under, and furniſh our minds with ſuch apprehenſions as may be moſt effectual for the purpoſe; no matter whether they contain the whole grounds whereon we proceed. And even in our ſyſtems of Theology and Religion deſigned for ordinary uſe, regard muſt be had not only to the nature of things and to what we know, but likewiſe to the nature of Man and what he is able eaſily to conceive.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Divine Purity.

HAVING found it neceſſary to conſult all parts of our nature, as well as our inferior faculties preſenting the familiar images and trains of thought riſing habitually before our view, as the ſcientific and rational, in order to frame a ſet of ſentiments that may ſerve us upon ordinary occaſions; it will be proper to begin with compleating our theology. And this brings us to the three remaining Attributes of Purity, Majeſty, and Holineſs; which had no place among the eſoterics as being not diſcoverable by contemplation of the divine nature alone, nor the adminiſtration of Providence, but rather negative of what is in man, than affirmative of any thing in God. For Purity by the derivation implies an exemption from all foul and heterogeneous mixture: ſo water is pure when clear of mud and ſoil and unmingled with other liquors; gold is pure when undebaſed by any alloy; and the mind is pure when untouched by ſordid paſſions or beſtial deſires. But theſe things are capable of having dregs and foulneſſes introduced among them, therefore Purity is an excellence, nor can we compleat our idea of perfection in them without it. Whereas the divine eſſence, being ſimple and individual, cannot mingle with any thing foreign to itſelf;

and

and being impaſſive, not affected by objects of ſenſation and reflection, can receive no change of ſtate from paſſions or deſires of any kind. One ſhould wonder then why a particular Attribute is aſſigned the ſupreme Being, to preſerve him from a debaſement it is not in his nature to undergo: we might as well make an Attribute of abſtemiouſneſs becauſe he lives without eating, or of hardineſs becauſe he wears no cloaths to keep him warm.

Nevertheleſs it is not ſo material in this caſe to conſider what is the divine eſſence, as what is the form and condition of our own imagination. For we cannot behold God intuitively: we can comprehend him no otherwiſe than by ſuch repreſentation as we are able to frame of him in our thoughts. With the utmoſt ſtretch of our underſtanding, we cannot delineate him exactly, but ſtill find him incomprehenſible; and that miniature we carry about in our hearts for conſtant uſe, falls ſhort even of the drawings in our underſtanding: whence our repreſentation no more contains the full character of the original, than the print of a picture or ſtatue does that of the hero it was deſigned to reſemble. So that at beſt we are all but idolaters, and the materials employed in making up our golden image are drawn from our own fund: for we pick what golden particles we can find in ourſelves, whatever we eſteem an excellence or greatneſs, or power, or perfection in man; and

raiſing

raiſing them to the higheſt degree we can conceive, thereout form our idea of God. But without due care ſome of the droſs belonging to us will cling to the ingredients, and fix itſelf inſenſibly among the compoſition. This is the Idol we worſhip, to which we look up for protection, and the continual contemplation whereof aſſimilates our character gradually to itſelf: therefore it is of the utmoſt importance to keep this idea clear of all manner of groſſneſs, weakneſs, or impurity.

The Heathen world ſuppoſed their Gods not excepting Jove himſelf the ſupreme Monarch over all, ſubject to the vices, the follies, the humours and the brutal appetites of man: becauſe they found the like among their heroes and excellent perſons, the ſons and grandſons of Gods. The Stoics held the material univerſe to be God, aſſerted that he was the moſt perfect animal, of a round form and perpetual activity, whirling round every four and twenty hours: becauſe they could conceive no underſtanding without material organs to ſerve for inſtruments of its operations. There have been Chriſtians called Anthropomorphites, who aſcribed to God a human ſhape: becauſe I ſuppoſe they had ſo much of the Epicurean as to hold that intelligence could not ſubſiſt without a brain and ſenſes and members ſuch as our own.

And

And though we have now, I believe, univerſally diſcarded all corporeal mixture from the divine eſſence, except in ſpeaking figuratively of the hand, the eye, the ear, the mouth, which we know to be figurative expreſſions at the inſtant of employing them: yet when I hear the enthuſiaſts and illuminated people talk ſo feelingly of the finger of God immediately touching their hearts, and inſiſt upon the evidence of ſenſe for their revelations; I cannot help ſuſpecting they have an idea of ſomething corporeal and ſenſible operating upon them; and if they call this the immediate act of God, what is it but making God corporeal? I can juſt remember when the women firſt taught me to ſay my prayers; I uſed to have the idea of a venerable old man, of a compoſed benign countenance, with his own hair, clad in a morning gown of a grave coloured flowered damaſk, ſitting in an elbow chair. I am not diſturbed at the groſſneſs of my infant Theology, it being the beſt I could then entertain: for I was then much about as wiſe as Epicurus, having no conception of ſenſe or authority poſſible out of a human form. And perhaps the time will come when if I can look back upon my preſent thoughts, I may find the moſt elevated of them as unworthy of their object as I now think the old man in the elbow chair.

2. We now conceive of God as a Spirit, without mixture of any thing material to ſerve him either

either for organ or inſtrument: but then we take our notion of Spirit from thoſe among whom we are converſant, that is, from one another; whom we find acting to accompliſh ſomething expedient, or to gratify ſome deſire, directed by the notices of their judgment or ſenſes, and characterized by their ſentiments and affections: ſo we apprehend him attentive to the contingencies of chance and free-will, receiving information from his all-diſcerning eye, proceeding upon the judgments of perfect reaſon, actuated by thoſe we ſtile the noble affections, concerned for the well-being of his race of men, ſolicitous to compaſs his gracious purpoſes and to receive the tribute of their willing obedience. Still the lineaments of our image are fetched from human nature, and ſo they muſt always be; for we have no colours to employ, nor archetypes to copy, but what were handed to us from experience. And though by the careful exerciſe of our underſtanding, we may improve gradually in the fineneſs of our ſtrokes, yet we cannot retain the delicateſt of them in our imagination; which will diſcern only the groſſer parts and ſee the colours changeable.

3. Therefore we are forced to diſcourſe and think of God as earneſt and anxious, delighted or grieved, angry, compaſſionate, jealous, or favourable, honoured, ſerved, hurt, or reſiſted, by our manner of behaviour: apprehending him

him ſometimes an indulgent parent who will not mark what is amiſs, at others an unrelenting judge who will call to judgment for every idle word; confining our eye to the amiable or terrible part of his character according as we happen to be in the humour or as things fall out round about us. This neceſſity of aſcribing our own affections and ſentiments to God, and the variable quality of our ideas, operating inſenſibly to ourſelves, will introduce thoſe of the unworthy ſort, and make us attribute the imperfections, the frailties or even the foulneſs of created ſpirits to him, before we are aware: ſo as to work ſometimes a laſting deluſion, but oftener a temporary diſquietude and miſapprehenſion in our minds.

4. This miſchief cannot be totally eſcaped, for thoſe who pretend to the higheſt perfection complain of their obſcurities, their aridities, their deſpondencies, their deſertions, and all mankind beſides can ſee their deluſions and their wildneſs both of thought and conduct; nor are the moſt ſoberly judicious without their lamentations at being unable to preſerve conſtantly the ſame equal tenor of mind: nevertheleſs it may be leſſened and in great meaſure remedied by diligence and good management. For we have ſeen before in our examination of human nature, that reaſon has ſome power to give a tincture of her own colours to the inferior faculties; and by her continual though gentle efforts,

efforts, to work an alteration in the habits and trains of thinking. This then is the ſervice we may expect to draw from our eſoterics: firſt to contemplate the divine eſſence, the diſpoſitions of providence and courſes of nature as well external as internal, from thence to gather the reaſonable expectation of events, and natural conſequences of actions in particular ſituations of circumſtances we are likely to come into: and then ſecondly to conſider what affections apprehended in the Diſpoſer of all things would produce the ſame effect.

Thus if the philoſopher ſees that proviſion is made for all events within the plan of providence by a complicated multitude of cauſes, moſt of them undiſcernable by us, and taking a contrary turn to what we ſhould expect; he will repreſent God as watchful over contingencies, to rectify their errors, and guide them continually by his ſecret influence into their proper channels. If he diſcovers that the ſame good or evil will naturally follow upon certain actions as would be diſtributed by man according as gratified or angry; he will inculcate the opinions of thoſe affections in the Deity. If he knows that unbecoming notions of God muſt introduce diſquietude, diſorder and unhappineſs among mankind; he will deſcribe him as extreamly jealous of his glory. If he obſerves that ample proviſion is made for the wants, conveniencies and enjoyments of the creatures; he will paint him

as a kind and indulgent parent. If he finds reaſon to believe that every evil terminates in greater good; he will delineate him compaſſionate and tender, remembering mercy in judgement, correcting for our benefit. If he perceives the laws of nature ſtedfaſt, not to be broken through; he figures him a reſolute governor and inflexible judge. If he experiences our induſtry and ſpirits riſe in proportion as we can fancy ourſelves of importance to the perſon upon whoſe account we exert them; he tries to work a perſuaſion of God being deſirous of our ſervices, delighted with our gratitude, ſolicitous for our well-being, earneſt to have us conduct ourſelves wiſely, diſappointed at our deſerting him, grieved at our diſreſpect, troubled to ſee us run into miſchief, and anxious to prevent our miſconduct. And ſo of the reſt: employing the ſprings of imagination to effect that very temper of mind and tenor of conduct, which the moſt refined reaſon and extenſive underſtanding would recommend, upon the contemplation of nature, expedience and rectitude.

4. Therefore he neither prevaricates with others nor practiſes double dealing himſelf, by uſing one ſet of doctrines for the cloſet, and another for the world. For both contain the ſame matter and conduce to the ſame point: the latter being no more than a verſion from the long-winded uniform, correct, refined language of philoſophy, into the conciſe, looſe, figurative,

tive, fluctuating manner of expreſſion, fit for common diſcourſe. It has been ſhewn upon ſeveral occaſions before, that reaſon has not the immediate command of our active powers, which are conducted by affections and deſires whoſe views, being ſhort and confined, turn from time to time upon certain marks of purſuit hanging juſt before them, and we being ſo conſtantly habituated to this ſtate of mind in ourſelves, cannot ordinarily comprehend otherwiſe even of God himſelf. Wherefore we are excuſable in practiſing this manner of comprehenſion, provided we render it as refined and celeſtial as our imagination will bear, ſtriving to exclude all impurities or groſs commixtures that can poſſibly be ſpared without leaving the idea too thin to be ſenſible. And this poſſibility is relative to times and perſons: for when bodily diſorders obſcure our faculties, when the hurry of buſineſs leaves no room for reflection, if our talents be ſmall, our education low, our profeſſion or converſe confining us to vulgar objects, we ſhall not be able to raiſe them above groſs and ſenſible ideas. Therefore that conception is pure and clean to every man, which is the pureſt and cleaneſt he can entertain.

For my part, when I reflect that it is poſſible I may outlive my own underſtanding, as they ſay Sir Iſaac Newton did, to whom his own Theorems became unintelligible myſteries, or be debilitated in my faculties by ſome paralytic

diſorder; I cannot expect to have the benefit of what little refinements I have made ſhift to ſpin out in the foregoing ſheets: therefore am deſirous of laying up a ſtock of ſuch ſentiments, as I can then retain to be my comfort in my ſecond childhood. And when I conſider how many people are occupied in the loweſt offices of life, who with the care and opportunities afforded me, might perhaps have run greater lengths than I can pretend to: I cannot content myſelf with framing ſpeculations for the amuſement of ſuch only as were brought up at the univerſity, without thinking of the peaſant, the labourer, and the cookmaid.

Yet the imagination may be made ſuſceptible of pure ideas gradually, but it cannot be done haſtily nor by violence, nor pouring more at once into the veſſel than it will take: ſo the buſineſs is to obſerve every little ſtep that may be made in the approach towards the ſtate whereinto we would bring it. If men of thought would take care to agree a little better among themſelves, they would find much might be done upon the vulgar by general conſent and example. Of which we have ſufficient experience in the difference between the preſent world and the ancient: for they could not do without images, ſacrifices, numerous rites and corporeal ingredients in their idea of the Deity, which are now wholly baniſhed from the loweſt of our people.

5. Yet

5. Yet are we ſtill liable unthinkingly to fall into little artifices for working upon the divine affections, as we work upon one another. The child finds it can prevail upon its mother's fondneſs by fretfulneſs and complaining: ſo we murmur and grumble againſt providence, and fret when things fall out contrary to our liking. We can ſometimes influence our fellow-creatures by our eſtimation of their conduct, and ſhame them out of their inobſervance of us by taking it in dudgeon: ſo we arraign the juſtice of God, paſs our cenſure upon his proceedings, and take it amiſs that leſs righteous and leſs deſerving people are better dealt with than ourſelves; on the other hand we may win upon one another by expreſſions of our good opinion and readineſs to oblige: ſo we expect to raiſe a fondneſs in God by our oblations, our aſſiduities, our uncommon zeal in his ſervice, and flattering him in our thoughts, perſuading ourſelves that we ſee a rectitude and wiſdom in diſpenſations where we really do not.

This timorouſneſs of offending the divine delicacy, as I may call it, has proved a main obſtacle againſt true freedom of thought, and improvement as well in ſcience as belief. For becauſe our friends may be diſguſted with us for an unſeaſonable ſincerity, and ſoothed by politeneſs and complaiſance: therefore we dare not examine our own thoughts impartially, for fear God ſhould ſee them at the ſame time, and take diſtaſte at them. But if we have any la-

tent ſcruple or infidelity within us, it is in vain to diſſemble with the ſearcher of hearts, and highly expedient for ourſelves that we ſhould know it: for unleſs the diſtemper be diſcovered, there is no applying remedies for the cure of it.

Nevertheleſs a man may ſometimes be brought into an opinion by perſuading himſelf that he has it, or got rid of a miſapprehenſion by forbearing to contemplate it; and the ſtate of our bodily humours, or unfavourable circumſtances will now and then raiſe a temporary notion that is not our ſettled opinion: in which caſes there is no better way than to baniſh what diſturbs us from our reflection, or reſerve it for a more favourable ſeaſon of calmer and clearer judgement: for there are ſome ſores that may be made to heal themſelves only by keeping them covered from the air. So that there is a diſcretion to be obſerved upon this article, as well as all others relating to the purity of our ideas: ſomething groſs and human we muſt mingle in our conceptions of God, becauſe it is unavoidable, and more we muſt not mingle than is unavoidable.

Therefore it is a very nice point to diſtinguiſh exactly what is neceſſary to give a ſolid body to our Religion, that it may not evaporate, yet without retaining a ſingle particle more of *caput mortuum* than requiſite to fix the ſpirit: as likewiſe to diſcern what is neceſſary for other people, though miſchievous and improper for ourſelves. Herein lies the great difficulty in model-

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ling the popular or exoteric doctrines, ſo that while all agree in outward form or profeſſion, each may hold them in the utmoſt degree of purity whereof he is reſpectively capable. And this being a matter of equal importance and nicety, it becomes us daily to purify our conceptions, and enlarge them ſo far as they can bear: for in ſo doing we ſhall purify our conduct, and ſecure a ſteady unruffled ſerenity of mind.

6. But there is ſtill another branch of purity, which conſiſts in ſeparating our idea of God from all external objects of naſtineſs and impurity: and here the exoteric doctrine runs directly contrary to the eſoteric. For the latter deſcribes him omnipreſent and omniſcient, filling the whole immenſity of ſpace, beholding all his works and their works without exception; alike preſent in the kitchen as in the chapel, at the hogſty as at the ſacred altar; obſerving us in our follies as well as our ſerious employments; alike attentive to us in our neceſſary uncleanneſſes as in our fervent devotions. I ſhould here, according to my ordinary method, particularize in ſome ſtriking inſtances, where we could not reaſonably exclude the divine preſence, nor obſervance: but I refrain, leſt while I labour to convince the underſtanding, I might ſhock the imagination. But whoever will caſt a momentary glance upon what his own reflection may ſuggeſt, will inſtantly feel how inexpedient it is to entertain conceptions of every thing we know

to be true, and how neceſſary to provide one ſyſtem for the cloſet, and another for our familiar uſe.

For we are not to conceit ourſelves that we carry the real eſſences even of common things in our minds, much leſs of the moſt excellent and glorious of all Beings: we apprehend them only in types and colours drawn out upon our ſenſory.—It has been obſerved before that the God we worſhip is no more than an idol framed out of human materials, picked up from our own compoſition. Therefore though the divine Eſſence be more than Ithuriels ſpear, incapable of defilement by any ordures, however ſurrounded or intimately penetrated by it, and being nauſeated or any ways affected by any objects however diſguſtful or loathſome: yet the idea in our imagination may be polluted by filthineſs clinging to it. Such then being the caſe, and it having pleaſed God to ſubject us to ſome baſe employments and offenſive objects we cannot avoid: it behoves us to lay aſide every idea of that ſort when we think of him. Which ſhews the extravagance of thoſe enthuſiaſts, who exhort us literally to have God always in our thoughts, and do every action of our lives with intention to pleaſe him: becauſe this muſt continually draw us into groſs offences againſt his purity. For if every time we ſhifted or waſhed our hands, or cut our corns, or did other things I do not care to name, we were to do them with direct

direct intention to pleaſe him; it would be more likely to debaſe and contaminate than enoble and ſanctify our minds, to degrade him below ourſelves, than raiſe us to a nearer reſemblance with him.

7. And as the groſſneſs of our imaginations obliges us to exclude our idea of God from certain places unſuitable for his reception: ſo the narrowneſs of them compels us to confine him to ſome particular place of reſidence. For omnipreſence is by much too large an idea for our comprehenſions to graſp: we cannot conceive an immenſity of ſpace, much leſs the thought of our uncompounded individual Being; exiſtent throughout the whole capaciouſneſs of ſpace. For we take our notions of magnitude from body, which occupies a larger or ſmaller room in proportion to the quantity of matter, or number of parts contained in it, or the diſtance whereto they are ſtretched from one another: and with reſpect to the preſence of perceptive Beings, we diſtinguiſh between that and the place of their exiſtence; for while ſtanding in one ſpot, we apprehend every thing done in our preſence that paſſes within a compaſs wherein we can diſcern it diſtinctly. Our imagination being habituated to this manner of conception by the objects wherewith we are continually converſant, we cannot caſt it into any other form when we contemplate the ſupreme Being; to whom therefore we aſſign a peculiar

peculiar habitation, yet extending his preſence, beyond the place of his exiſtence.

But becauſe we ourſelves cannot be preſent in one place without being abſent from others, and become familiariſed to things appearing continually in our preſence, it would vilify, and, I may ſay, vulgariſe the Almighty, to imagine him reſident among ourſelves, and what muſt follow of courſe in our thoughts engaged among the trifling ſcenes that occupy our notice. Therefore we ſay God is in heaven and we upon earth, that he dwells in the heaven of heavens, in the centre of inacceſſible light. Now it is no matter where we ſuppoſe this heaven to be, whether above the clouds, or in the ether, or the ſuperceleſtial regions, it were better not to examine the point too minutely, but leave every one at liberty to place it where he finds moſt convenient to his own imagination: only taking care to fix it in ſome ſpot from whence the ever-wakeful eye of Providence may behold diſtinctly all the concerns of the earth, the courſes of nature, the workings of fortune, the ſecret chambers of darkneſs, and inmoſt receſſes of the human heart.

8. This limited imagination of the Deity renders him capable of loco-motion (an article that can never find admittance in the eſoteric creed:) ſo that he can go forth to plan out the ſpaces for a new world, to lay the foundations of the ſtedfaſt mountains, to ſet bounds to the reſtleſs ocean,

ocean, to clothe the ground with all the variety of vegetables, to give command to his elements and ſeaſons by the word of his mouth, and to ſurvey his works with complacence, beholding them very good. Nor will it be incongruous to repreſent him deſcending upon great occaſions to interfere in the adminiſtration of affairs below: riding in whirlwinds, upheaving redundant ſeas, ſhaking the ſolid ground with earthquakes, rending the heavens with tremendous thunders, turning the ſcale of victory, reſcuing nations from deſtruction, giving the turn to critical events, determining the fall of kingdoms. For there cannot be an operation without an immediate preſence of the agent, nor can our narrow minds conceive him preſent in an unuſual place without a removal from his ordinary reſidence: but our thoughts are too buſied in ſeaſons of extraordinary events to reflect that a preſence in one place implies an abſence from elſewhere.

And it will be expedient for the like reaſon to apprehend him peculiarly preſent at ſome certain times and places, when we withdraw from our uſual ſcenes and occupations; for then it will rather raiſe than ſully our imaginations: but of this I may have occaſion to treat more particularly in ſome ſucceeding chapter. If any one ſhall find theſe images too groſs for his uſe, he will do right to refuſe them admittance: but as the beſt of us have ſomething vulgar in our

compoſition, we may employ ſome popular ideas without hurt to the purity of our refined theory; and we ſhall reap this advantage from bringing ourſelves acquainted with the management of them, that we ſhall be better able to help our neighbours by preventing from falling into a groſſneſs they can avoid. And an open-hearted truly benevolent man will ſtrive to think as well as act, not for himſelf alone, but for the benefit of as many as he can do ſervice to, either way.

CHAP. IV.

Majeſty.

THE very notion of a ſelf-exiſtent Being, the Creator and Governor of all things, carries in it an idea of greatneſs and pre-eminence beyond compariſon. For the exiſtence, the powers and privileges of all other ſubſtances being derived originally from him, whatever they poſſeſs muſt have been contained in the fountain from whence they derived, which could not give better things than it had to beſtow. So that all we ſee great, or noble, or admirable, or excellent among the creatures, reſides collectively in the author of their natures. And as our knowledge ſtands confined within a very ſmall part of his works, we ſee nothing of thoſe excellencies and ſubjects of admiration which lie beyond

bepond our notice. Nor could we ſurvey the whole ſtupendous fabric compleatly, have we reaſon to believe but that there are greater riches of power and glory than ſtand exemplified in any diſtrict of the univerſe: for we have found in the former part of our progreſs, that the buſineſs of creation requires other Attributes than thoſe hitherto known to the Sons of Adam.

The ſame notion too beſides intrinſic greatneſs and excellence, implies uncontrolable Authority and abſolute Dominion: for the creatures ſubſiſting at firſt by the will of their Creator, how ſtable a conſtitution ſoever they may have received, can ſubſiſt no longer, than that Will ſhall permit. He that gave can take away, and what originally created, can ſtation, compound, alter or diſpoſe as ſeemeth good: there being nothing more powerful to limit, nor ſuperior to lay an obligation upon him. Theſe points are too evident to be much enlarged upon, for it is the difficulties and obſcurities in a ſubject that give ſcope to argument and illuſtration. And they are too luminous and magnificent to be contemplated by us, for a redundance of light is as unfit for our optics as a defect of it: nor can we diſcern any thing diſtinctly of very large objects until removed to a diſtance that may contract them within the circle of our viſion.

Therefore as we ſee the ſun better through a ſmoaked glaſs or in a pail of water than by looking at him directly, ſo we can more eaſily diſcern

diſcern the power and glory of God, through the veil of ſecond cauſes, or by reflection in his works, or in the miniſtry of inferior powers executing his commands, than by contemplating him in his eſſence or immediate operations: for which reaſon he is often repreſented as acting by his ſubordinate miniſters, ſending his deſtroying or protecting Angel to ſpread deſolation, peſtilence, and famine, or to guard the righteous from danger and guide his ſteps that he hurt not his foot againſt a ſtone.

2. But all this relates only to his almighty Power and the eſſential perfection of his nature, but will not conduct us to his Attribute of Majeſty: which is one of the moral Attributes, whereby we ſuppoſe him witholden from works and objects unbecoming the dignity of his character. And here again our exoterics will run directly oppoſite to our eſoterics: for our reaſon when ſtretching her eye to the utmoſt verge of contemplation, repreſents him omnipreſent, intelligent, and powerful, in every mathematical point throughout the whole immenſity of ſpace. That nothing, not the minuteſt object, eſcapes his notice, nor the moſt trifling incident eludes his care. That all things being the work of his hands, are good, and of importance in the ſtations wherein he has reſpectively placed them, therefore none are unbecoming his attention. That he orders, diſpoſes and provides for them all, their ſituations, aſſortments, motions and opera-

operations without exception: for no multiplicity of buſineſs can diſtract him, but he has vigour and underſtanding to ſpare for the moſt inſignificant, without deſcending from his dignity, or intermitting the moſt glorious of his works.

But this is by much too large a field to be drawn upon any ſcale in our imagination; if we reflect ever ſo little upon the diverſity of characters, humours and intereſts among mankind, the various inſtincts, natures and properties of animals, the infinite multitude of diverſly qualified particles floating about in air, earth, and ocean, the number, intricacy, and imperceptible influence of cauſes affecting almoſt every event befalling us; we ſhall quickly bewilder ourſelves, and find it beyond all conception to apprehend all theſe reduced under a regular direction and comprized in one uniform plan. Therefore it were in vain to attempt it, and we had beſt take our exoteric idea from ſome archetype we can find in ourſelves more familiar to our experience.

3. Now we find our capacities circumſcribed within a certain compaſs, ſtraitened in our knowledge and limited in our powers; we have a ſphere of action extending but little way beyond ourſelves, changing as we move, ſo that if we go to employ our activity upon things at a diſtance, we loſe the reach of thoſe we left behind: and though our ſphere may contain many ſubjects, we cannot act upon them all, but only have our option to exert ourſelves upon

upon one, or a few among the reſt; nor can we do our buſineſs effectually without applying our whole attention to the preſent thing we take in hand. We likewiſe receive aſſiſtance in our operations from habit and practice, which give an eaſe and inclination to the courſes whereto we have been familiarized, and render us aukward and unable to make a progreſs in thoſe from which they have kept us ſtrangers.

Hence it becomes neceſſary to make a ſelection among the objects before us, and our abilities being ſcanty, to lay them out where they may turn to the greateſt profit. And as we have motives of honour as well as advantage to influence us, it is unbecoming to employ ourſelves in mean and trivial matters, in preference to the more valuable and excellent. Yet is this excellence in ſome caſes relative, for though there be many ways of ſpending time which are below any reaſonable creature to take; there are works neceſſary and convenient in life, which therefore cannot be baſe, and unbecoming in themſelves, it being the Duty of ſome to undergo them, yet are unworthy the attention of others who are called to higher ſervices. For we are placed in different ſtations upon earth, we have different employments to follow, different habits and inclinations to encourage for forwarding us in the performance of them. Therefore it would be a demeaning himſelf for a perſon in high ſtation to beſtow his thoughts

thoughts and induſtry upon matters belonging to thoſe of lower degree: becauſe he could not do this without omitting the functions incumbent upon him to fulfil, and contracting taſtes unſuitable to his character.

And that this is what makes ſuch condeſcenſion a debaſement of dignity, may appear from hence: becauſe where a man can concern himſelf with trifles at intervals, and converſe among the vulgar upon particular occaſions without taking off his thoughts from higher matters, without interfering with the proper functions of his ſtation, or interrupting his intercourſe among his equals, it is never deemed to fix a ſpeck of blemiſh upon his character; more eſpecially where neceſſary for his health or recreation of ſpirits, or conducive to ſome important uſe. Tully tells us that Scipio and Lælius, the two greateſt men of the greateſt nation upon earth, uſed in their country retirements, to buſy themſelves in picking cockle ſhells and pebbles upon the ſhore, and ſtoop to all kinds of innocent puerilities; nor are affability and condeſcenſion eſteemed leſs than ornaments to a nobleman.

The Czar Peter the Great is ſaid to have ſerved as a common Sailor in the Dutch navy, and worked with a hatchet among the carpenters in our dock-yards; but then he had in view the improvement of his own marine by perfecting himſelf in all the branches of it: ſo theſe vile

occupations did not take off his thoughts from the proper functions of his imperial office, nor did they weaken but rather tend to eſtabliſh his title of Great. The ſubaltern, when raiſed by degrees to a commander in chief, muſt lay aſide thoſe offices it was his praiſe to be punctual in executing before; ſuch as viſiting the quarters, inſpecting the firelocks, hearing complaints, and preventing quarrels among the private men: becauſe he has other buſineſs to take care of, not more important in itſelf, for unleſs things be rightly ordered among the private men, the army will be capable of but little ſervice, but more important for him to regard. For this reaſon it is beneath perſons in extenſive truſts to concern themſelves with minute matters: it is their part to confine their attention to general regulations, as being enough to take up the whole of it: nor can they execute otherwiſe than by the miniſtry of inferiors, without deſcending from their point of eminence, from whence they may direct and overſee much greater works than they could compleat by their own induſtry.

But a ruler, to execute by his inferiors muſt have their due ſubmiſſion and ready obedience, which depend in great meaſure upon the ſentiments they entertain of his perſon: for men are but ſenſitivo-rational animals, actuated for the moſt part by ſenſe and imagination, which alone give us a readineſs in our performances: nor will duty, advantage, or fear of puniſhment, anſwer

anſwer compleatly without a reverential eſteem and admiration. But imagination is guided by appearances, which conſequently deſerve his attention: therefore he will keep a ſtate, go ſurrounded with attendants, affect a ceremony and ſolemnity, aſſume a grandeur of deportment and expreſſion ſuitable to his rank, ſo far but no farther than needful to impreſs the requiſite degree of reſpect upon the populace; and he will diſdain every little action or geſture that might degrade or make him cheap in their eſtimation.

4. This then being the conſtant courſe of experience in human affairs, wherein there is an allotment of offices and occupations; thoſe deſtined to the higheſt, looking upon it as a degradation to meddle in the inferior, marked out from among the multitude by external diſtinctions of equipage, ceremony, magnificence, dreſs and demeanour: and the works of induſtry being carried on by numbers, uſing powers and capacities of their own under the direction of one, who contributes nothing more than his direction: our imagination falls ſo ſtrongly into that train, that we can never get it to run in any other, without an immediate force and violence put upon it by the utmoſt ſtretch of our underſtanding, which we no ſooner take off than it conſtantly recoils again.

Therefore when we let our thoughts roam upon external nature, an idea of the like polity

immediately occurs: we conceive the elements, the ſeeds of vegetables, the ſalts, the acids, the ſpirit contained in them, to have an activity of their own; we imagine chance an operating power producing events, and free will taking a direction for which there were no cauſes exiſtent before their operation: we preſume general laws provided for the maintenance of order, and regulating the Sum of Affairs without deſcending to minute caſes, too numerous to be comprized in any code, we ſuppoſe God, the King of nature, ſeated upon his imperial throne ſomewhere above the fogs and vapours of this loathſome earth, environed with ineffable glory, ſurrounded by hoſts of Angels, Archangels, Seraphs, Cherubs, Principalities and powers awaiting his command, by whoſe miniſtry he has the diſpoſal of ſecond cauſes at a diſtance, or by an inexpreſſible energy communicated thereto in a manner there is no occaſion for us to examine too ſtrictly.

In this way we apprehend him continually making freſh proviſion for correcting the errors of chance and diſorders of free will, governing like an earthly monarch by new edicts and new application of his power, executed by miniſters he employs. If we allow him to regard particular events, this is only upon extraordinary occaſions, when they draw conſequences of great importance after them: ſuch as the fate of empires, the ſucceſs of battles, the ſalvation of a

ſoul,

ſoul, or preſervation of a human life. This being the conſtant ſtrain of our diſcourſes ſhews that we cannot eaſily caſt our thoughts into any other form: and as men continually ſpeak of the divine operations in figurative expreſſions, they muſt of courſe apprehend them bearing a ſimilitude with the figures they employ. For as in reading a romance or a poem, we take a temporary perſuaſion of their being real facts, and of our converſing among the perſons and ſcenes they repreſent: ſo the perpetual uſe of allegory will aſſimilate the mind to the train of conceptions it conveys.

5. Now ſince our imagination is ſo habituated to conceptions of this kind, that it becomes impracticable to impreſs others of an oppoſite caſt, ſo as to carry them about with us for our ordinary uſe; we muſt model our common ſyſtem of providence accordingly, complying with neceſſity, and humouring the imperfection of our nature which we cannot mend. And as we can never totally get rid of chance and trifle in our thoughts, but many things ſeem to paſs around us merely caſual and utterly inſignificant, ſuch will neceſſarily appear themſelves, and render the agents concerned in them, contemptible in our eyes. On the other hand the capacity and management of great affairs give us an idea of dignity, which riſes in proportion to the importance of employments occupying an Agent or pre-eminence above other powers ſubordinate;

and is hurt by the junction of any thing mean, or trivial.

Since then it is of the utmoſt conſequence, as well to the right condition of our minds as the regularity of our conduct, to entertain an awful and reverential notion of the Almighty, as having power to diſpoſe of all events, and ſupreme Governor over all creatures: it behoves us to aſcribe to him an Attribute of Majeſty, to conceive him jealous of his glory, expecting our obedience and adoration; to remove every trifling event and mean object from our thoughts, when we have him in them; and to raiſe our idea of him, by ſuch images as are ſuitable to the higheſt degree, that the weakneſs and groſſneſs of our faculties will admit. For as we obſerved before under the article of Purity, though the eſſence of God be incapable of actual defilement by any filthineſs co-exiſtent in the ſame place with it, yet the idea of him in our hearts may be polluted and ruſted over by impurities adhering thereto: ſo although his omnipreſent power cannot be degraded nor his attention engroſſed by any operation, but that he may govern events ſeemingly the moſt inſignificant without deſcending from his government of worlds and hierarchies, yet the ſame idea may be degraded by joining it with ſuch minute employments; for that is far from being omnipreſent, though the original it was deſigned to repreſent be ſo. For our attention being confined to the ſpot we think on, we cannot

cannot apprehend him attentive to trifles without taking off his eye from what appear, to us, the proper functions of his divine Majeſty.

Nevertheleſs we may ſafely apprehend him interpoſing upon extraordinary occaſions, for ſo we ſee our princes and great men do without leſſening their dignity: or taking care of our particular concerns, for we are always of vaſt importance to ourſelves; and what concerns us nearly engaging the mind deeply, ſerves rather to elevate than depreſs our idea of the cauſe operating towards it.

6. Thus in opinions relative to the Attribute of Majeſty it is more requiſite to regulate them by our own nature than the divine, and carefully avoid whatever might appear injurious to it in our own apprehenſion, however agreeable to our eſoteric reaſonings. Therefore here, as before in treating of Purity, we ſhall often find it expedient to conceive of things otherwiſe than we know them to be. And we practiſe the like reſerve with reſpect to thoſe whom we eſteem upon earth; we know the greateſt men muſt change their linen, waſh their hands, pare their nails, and ſtoop to other baſe offices reckoned ſhameful in nature: yet to dwell upon theſe thoughts would leſſen our reverence of their perſons. So we have ſeen in our Chapter of Providence how the greateſt events are liable to be influenced by the ſmalleſt, ſo that the accompliſhment of them cannot be ſecured, if the little particles of earth, air, and vapour, the in-

ſtincts of animals, or fancies of human creatures, be ſuffered to run at random.

A grain of duſt falling in a man's eye while fighting, may prove his deſtruction: a few particles of ruſt upon a firelock, or of damp in the pan, may ſave a life: a waſp miſſing his hold in crawling up the ſides of a pot, may fall in to be drank by one, whom he ſhall ſting to death: a young lady by a lucky aſſortment of her Ribbons, may procure entrance into a family where ſhe ſhall become the mother of heroes, yet we cannot without impiety imagine God following the ſingle atoms of terrene, or aqueous matter as they float about in the air, watching his opportunity to trip up the feet of a crawling inſect, or attending a giddy girl when ſhe adjuſts her dreſs at the toilet. We know both from reaſon and authority, that of two ſparrows that are ſold for a farthing, not one falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father, and the hairs of our head are all numbered: yet what pious man, if upon combing his head he meets with a tangle that tears off two or three hairs, or if the cat ſhould happen to catch his favourite ſparrow, would aſcribe theſe cataſtrophes to the hand of Providence? Who would not be ſhocked at the profaneneſs of one, who, upon finding only the tail of a mouſe in his trap, or upon loſing a flea that he had hunted after, ſhould ſay, it was the Will of God they ſhould eſcape?

7. It is poſſible indeed by frequently comparing our eſoteric ideas with the exoteric, and obſerving how they tend ultimately to the ſame point, ſo to familiarize them to our imagination, as that we may entertain them without abating of the reverence we ought always to preſerve. This I may teſtify upon my own experience, having by practice brought ſeveral ſpeculations to lie eaſy and inoffenſive in my thoughts, which would have appeared uncouth, diſturbing and perplexing to them formerly, and may ſtill do ſo to other people. But this muſt be an effect of time and careful digeſtion: for imagination works by habitual aſſociations, and trains, which when running in very different courſes muſt have many channels of communication, worked between to make them coincide. In the proſecution of this attempt, great vigilance muſt be uſed not to admit any thing derogatory to our idea of the divine Majeſty, which we muſt endeavour to keep ſteady, ſolid, and connected in all its parts: and I believe, when doubts and perplexities do ariſe, it is owing to the fluctuation of our ideas, inſinuating ſome ſpeck of human paſſion or imbecility thereinto, unawares.

After the imagination has been thus gradually caſt into a new arrangement, it will become as averſe to ſome of the old ideas, as it was at firſt to the preſent: finding the divine Majeſty debaſed by that partiality and favour, that indignation,

nation, and abhorrence, that peremptorineſs of command, earneſt expectation of worſhip, alteration of meaſures upon occurrencies happening, judgement of characters upon obſervation of their conduct; which are ſo neceſſary for raiſing it with the generality. For they ſee the beſt and greateſt of men preferring their friends and favourites, indignant at affronts, deteſting villainies, commanding meerly to exerciſe their authority, pleaſed with homage, varying their ſchemes according to circumſtances, taking their eſtimation of perſons from their outward behaviour: nor do they diſcern that all this ſprings from the imperfection of human nature; ſo that in their apprehenſion it may well join with the idea of incomparable excellence. Thus the imaginations of mankind being differently modelled, and that in great variety of forms, regard muſt be had not only to the general turn, but to particular characters, ſo as to improve the idea of Majeſty in each, by ſuch way as may prove moſt effectual.

But an exceſs of colouring may be as hurtful as a defect: when the ſtrokes are laid on too thick they obſcure, rather than illuminate the figure. By conceiving our continual Services agreeable to God as his rightful due, we raiſe our idea of him: but by repreſenting them as giving him a real pleaſure, we make ourſelves of importance to him, and conſequently degrade him in our thoughts. By requiring an

unreſerved obedience to his commands without knowing their expedience, we acknowledge his ſovereign authority: but by ſuppoſing they have none other foundation than his arbitrary Will, we depreciate the grandeur of his wiſdom and bounty. And in many other duties it is a very nice point to diſtinguiſh how they may be ſtretched to the utmoſt without being over-ſtrained: for an extenſion beyond this point would unavoidably beget narrowneſs, inſtead of an enlargement of Mind. This then being an important as well as delicate point, it behoves all who have the guidance and inſtruction of others, to be cautious of urging their topics too ſtrongly; leſt by an indiſcreet zeal they leave things in worſe condition than they found them, and teach men to place the glory of God in matters that would caſt a diſcredit upon the character of an earthly creature.

8. Such indiſcretion abounds to profuſion among enthuſiaſts, who would have us keep up a glowing admiration of the divine excellencies at our work, in our play, during our meals, and for many hours of tedious devotion. But they do not conſider that admiration is an extraordinary ſtretch of the mind, which it cannot exert at all times, nor keep up beyond a certain period, when the ſpirits will be exhauſted, the mental eye grow languid, and if ſtill perſiſting to hold an object however luminous in contemplation, will ſee it obſcure, unſtriking, and no better

ter than common objects. Accordingly we hear them complain of frequent coolneſs, aridities, and deſertions: wherein they do no great honour to God in aſcribing the natural defects of human weakneſs to a kind of turn of humour in him, who one hour ſhews them extraordinary favours above all mankind, and the next deſerts them without any reaſon.

Neither would it avail for our purpoſe, were it practicable to retain God in our thoughts through all our little Occupations, and do every thing for his ſervice: were a man to change his coat, tie up his garters, or gather a noſegay in his garden, always to pleaſe God, it would diminiſh more than add to the reverence of his name. For by perpetually mingling terms of Religion among our common ideas and diſcourſes, we ſhall empty them of all their ſolemnity, and reduce them to meer Cant, a word derived from the Latin of ſinging, wherein people uſually attend to the muſic without heeding the ſenſe. And that your over-righteous people have ſerved them ſo, appears from their introducing them by head and ſhoulders upon occaſions, whereto they cannot be applicable. This humour prevailing generally among our forefathers in the times of both civil and religious anarchy, begot the contrary extreme, as it is called, of profane ſwearing, and burleſquing every thing ſerious: though it ſeems to me a ſimilar offspring, like the viper's brood, deſtroy-

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ing its parent, only that it might have the doing of the ſame miſchief itſelf, being the like expedient for evaporating all idea from the moſt ſignificant words in our language.

But the divine Majeſty, when rightly apprehended, undebaſed with alloying mixtures, being the idea which contributes moſt effectually to ennoble our thoughts, to keep our conduct ſteady, and ſtrengthen our dependance under unfavourable circumſtances, deſerves our beſt care and judgement to improve it. Which is propereſt done at thoſe ſeaſons when our thoughts are freſh, our minds moſt vigorous, and our underſtandings cleareſt, when contemplation is ready to flow ſpontaneouſly: by frequent efforts at ſuch times we may fix a deep impreſſion, not to ſtart up inceſſantly, but upon occaſion. For as a Man who has a ſteady loyalty to his prince, though he does not think of him every moment yet will inſtantly fire upon hearing any thing ſpoken diſreſpectfully againſt him: ſo he that poſſeſſes an habitual reverence of the divine Majeſty, though it may not operate directly upon every minute action of his life, yet whatever injurious thereto offers to his thoughts, will immediately give him an alarm.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Holineſs.

HOLINESS in its greateſt latitude implies an exemption from all taſtes, deſires and trains of thought, excited in us by our corporeal appetites or the allurement of ſenſible objects. Now this exemption in ourſelves can be no more than temporary: for our ſituation here upon earth renders it neceſſary and our duty to have continual intercourſe among the things external round about us, and the conſtitution of our nature obliges us to attend to the calls of Bodily appetite. While buſied in theſe occupations, our conduct is not holy, neither is it yet profane, but in a middle ſtate of indifference between both; but we are not ſo tied down to external objects or the imaginations ſpringing from thence, but that we may ſometimes ſeparate every thing of that kind from our thoughts, in order to contemplate the conſtitution of univerſal nature and character of its Author, to conſider ourſelves as citizens of the world, inheritors of a country where nothing terrene or carnal finds place.

Now it is this ſeparation from ordinary conjunctions that conſtitutes the idea of holineſs: for places are holy when ſeparated from all common uſes, and reſerved for our reception, when we aſſemble to raiſe our minds above ſublunary ſcenes.

ſcenes. Rites, ceremonies, and inſtitutions are holy, when contrived to turn imagination out of her familiar courſes, and introduce a ſolemnity ſuitable for religious purpoſes. Holy veſtments and utenſils are thoſe employed only in ſacred offices. Holy days are thoſe ſet apart for the attendance upon our ſpiritual concerns. And men are called holy and divine, who make it their profeſſion to ſtudy and practiſe the methods of leading their fellow-creatures into juſt notions of their Maker, and of their duties as well towards him, as themſelves, and their neighbours.

Thus holineſs bears a near affinity with the ſubjects handled in the two laſt Chapters: as not conſiſting with a mixture of any thing foul or unbecoming, mean or trivial. But ſome things are relatively ſo according to times and circumſtances: for many thoughts and actions would defile and debaſe the mind in ſeaſons of devotion, that may be innocent and commendable at other ſeaſons. Theſe things indulged too much, or improperly, obſcure and ſtupify the faculties, but do not pervert them; they clog the mind, but do not clip its wings: as ſome other practices do, which therefore are denominated wicked, as rendering it incapable of riſing to a holy diſpoſition, at any ſeaſon.

2. Therefore holineſs in a more reſtrained ſenſe ſtands oppoſed to moral impurity, which taints and fixes a laſting blemiſh upon the mind: when vice becomes a part of the character, and is adopted

adopted for a principal of action. For as in the Body there is a difference between meer weakneſs and diſeaſe; the one may ſubject to ſome inconveniencies, but does not vitiate the blood and juices, nor corrupt the ſolids, nor contain what is putrid and noiſome, like the other. So in the mental ſyſtem, infirmity is not the ſame with diſorder; the one can effect only the outward actions, whereas the other ſeizes upon the Will; the one miſleads and ſurprizes, while the other depraves. The beſt men have their weak and unguarded hours, wherein they act unwarrantably through the prevalence of their deſires, which are all of the natural kind, and become faulty only by their exceſs: though during theſe intervals they depart from their holineſs, yet as ſoon as the impulſe is over, their former tenor and diſpoſition returns again, ſo they do not loſe their character of holy, any more than a man loſes his character of a muſician by having his inſtrument witholden from him for a while.

But there are other deſires malignant and vicious, not ſpringing from nature but generated by evil habits and perverſe management, never innocent becauſe corrupt in kind, rather than exceſſive in degree: ſuch as envy, rancour, malice, injuſtice, cruelty, pride, rapaciouſneſs, ſordid ſelfiſhneſs, and the like. To which we may add ſuch exceſs of the natural deſires as have gotten ſo ſtrong hold of the heart as to be cheriſhed there with conſcious complacence,

even

even when their proper objects do not ſolicit: as ſenſuality, debauchery, unlawful gallantries, fondneſs of pleaſure and idleneſs.

All theſe being become habituated to the mind, ſtrike ſo ſtrong root there, as to change and deprave it in character, rendering it incapable of taking a holy diſpoſition, becauſe perpetually caſting up ideas incompatible therewith. For this reaſon it is incumbent upon us to ſtand always upon the watch, to prevent our infirmities from becoming diſeaſes, our neceſſary deſires from growing exceſſive and gaining an habitual fondneſs, our paſſions, ill-treatment from others, croſs accidents, unequal diſtributions of Providence, cuſtom, example, or company, from drawing us inſenſible into deſires unnatural, and eſſential evil.

3. But when we caſt up our eyes to the ſupreme Being, we ſhall ſee at firſt glance there is no occaſion for an Attribute of holineſs to keep him watchful againſt miſchiefs that cannot befal him. For he has no wants which might require appetites urging to ſupply them, no natural deſires that might riſe to exceſs and become habitual, no paſſions to beguile, errors to miſlead, influence of cuſtom, or company to pervert him: he cannot grudge the bleſſings himſelf has beſtowed, repine at the diſpenſations he has made, become ſoured by accidents which are none to him, grow proud at excelling the works of his Hands, nor harbour malice for injuries that

cannot hurt him. Therefore holineſs in him is no more than a negation of thoſe moral impurities, whereto our nature lies liable: and I believe there is nobody who will not readily acknowledge, that every thing of this kind ought to be excluded from our idea of God.

Nevertheleſs as I obſerved before, we take our lineaments of the ſublimeſt objects from archetypes found within ourſelves, and vice has ſuch a bewitching art of diſguiſing, as to make us miſtake her for virtue and holineſs; ſo that without careful attention, ſhe will palm her own odious features upon us for excellencies, and draw us inſenſibly to give them a place in that which ought to be all perfection. Thus we find the heathen world in general aſcribed ſenſuality, debauchery, competition, pride, envy, jealouſy, inveteracy, injuſtice, animoſity, cruelty, and other moral impurities, to their heavenly powers, whom yet they ſuppoſed elevated above the reach of human imperfection: nor did they perceive any inconſiſtency herein, becauſe they regarded thoſe diſpoſitions as no blemiſh nor mark of unholineſs in the moral character.

Mankind is now happily altered for the better in this reſpect: the leaſt enlightened among us acknowledge the unity and ſpirituality of the Godhead. So there is no room for ſenſuality, where there are no corporeal members to be employed as inſtruments therein: no place for inordinate exceſſes of deſire, where there is neither

ther Nectar, nor Ambroſia, nor other neceſſary allurement to excite a natural appetite: no competition, envy, nor jealouſy in a ſingle ſubſtance, who has none other to contend with, to rival, or to ſuſpect: no pride without an object to be ſet in compariſon: no rancour or animoſity where there is nothing to reſiſt the Will: no injuſtice in him who could not be profited thereby: no hatred in one whom an enemy cannot hurt nor obſtruct: no abhorrence or deteſtation of things which were the work of his own hand.

This is now ſo clearly underſtood by every body, that we never knowingly admit any mixture of moral foulneſs or human weakneſs into our idea of the divine character. Yet whoever will obſerve the diſcourſes and apprehenſions of the men and women he commonly meets with, may obſerve ſome of thoſe blemiſhes have crept in imperceptibly, and that by means of notions which were innocent and neceſſary at firſt, but have corrupted and periſhed by paſſing through our hands. Nor is the miſchief unfrequently encreaſed by the indiſcretion of ſome zealous teachers, who being not ſufficiently guarded in their thoughts at all points, purſue a favourite notion to extravagant lengths, until they run it down into abjectneſs and abſurdity.

4. It is proper that virtue ſhould be repreſented as agreeable in the eyes of God, and whatever is done in ſupport of his honour and

religion, in relief of his ſervants, or for the diſcouragement of wickedneſs, as done for his ſervice; becauſe this tends to urge and hearten us in the proſecution of our duty: but it is carrying the matter too far when we make ourſelves of importance to him, or fancy we can ſteal away his affections from our fellow-creatures, do him a real ſervice, or ſtrengthen his hands to overcome his enemies.

It is expedient we ſhould look upon things ſeemingly indifferent in themſelves as obligatory when enjoined by him, for we are not to diſpute his commands becauſe we do not diſcern the reaſonableneſs of them: but to imagine him giving arbitrary commands which have no foundation whatever in reaſon, or to be delighted with unavailing expreſſions of homage tending to no benefit either of our own or our fellow-creatures, introduces a littleneſs and unworthineſs into our idea of him.

While we endeavour to raiſe our minds to the higheſt ſenſe of his power, his goodneſs and his glory they can attain, we do well: but when we ſtrive to diſguiſe our real thoughts for fear of offending him, or uſe fallacious arguments in ſupport of his honour, we ſhall fall into an apprehenſion of him as being ceremonious and captious, liable to be impoſed upon by flattery, and taken with compliment.

In apprehending the actions and concerns of men to lie under the continual inſpection and conduct

conduct of his Providence, we do no more than is agreeable to ſound reaſon and truth: but if we ſuppoſe the eye of Providence engroſſed by particular Perſons in diſregard of the common herd, and anxiouſly attentive to their minute occaſions, ſo far as to provide a lodging for Whitefield, or preſerve his horſe from ſtumbling, we aſcribe to him the weak fondneſs and narrow underſtanding of human nature.

Nothing more ennobles and refines the mind than an unabating love of God, the ſtronger the better, ſo it be manly and decent, operating by a reverential dependance upon his protection, a full confidence in his mercy, and a perfect acquieſcence in the diſpenſations of his Providence, as believing them to terminate ultimately in our good: but as this affection is overſtrained by enthuſiaſts and devotees in a language unſuitable to it, when they talk of the ſoul pouring forth in pious breathings and tranſports, with their dear Lords and ſweet Jeſu's, they leave nothing noble nor heavenly in it; but court the Almighty in the ſame ſentiments they would court a miſtreſs, and mingle their own paſſions, thoſe too not of the pureſt kind, in their idea of the moſt holy.

It is requiſite that wickedneſs ſhould be repreſented as odious to him, and the perſons immerſed in it as living at enmity againſt him, becauſe this may raiſe a horror of it in ourſelves, and preſerve us againſt catching the contagion

from thoſe who are deeply infected with it: but when this notion carries men to hate and deteſt, to vex and deſtroy one another for his ſake, it is making him vindictive, rancorous, and cruel, and faſtening a moral impurity upon him which any good man would be aſhamed of. Thus there is a caution to be uſed in the management of the very topics employed to bring men into a holineſs of temper: for with a very little indiſcretion they may be made like other beſt things, which when corrupted become the worſt.

5. For as we have remarked ſeveral times before, our ideas of the divine character are all taken from archetypes found in our own, becauſe we have none others wherefrom to deſcribe any thing conceivable to our imagination. Hence it follows that our materials being defective, we can carry on the reſemblance but a little way without changing them, and employing new ones, oftentimes of a directly oppoſite colour, which being taken notice of by the unwary, who do not obſerve the neceſſity and occaſion of it, involves them in perplexities and contradictions.

Perhaps this is no where more apparent than in the doctrine of Providence, which whoever holds, muſt acknowledge to have the diſpoſal of the machinations and actions of men as well as all other events: and in our two Chapters upon that Article, and upon Freewill, we have laid down

down that every minute motion, both in the human breaſt and among the bodies around us, was comprized and noticed in the plan of Providence. I would not then point out the conſequences that might be drawn from this univerſal proviſion of cauſes, being unwilling to ſcandalize any body before I was ready to remove his ſcruples. If the candid reader has hitherto overlooked theſe conſequences, it is ſo much the better; yet as we cannot expect but they will occur to him ſome time or other, it is incumbent upon us to prepare the antidote: and conceiving this the proper place for ſo doing, we ſhall not ſcruple to diſcover the poiſon, which is that we may ſeem to have made God the Author of ſin.

For if all the follies and wickedneſs of mankind were owing to motives ſuggeſted by modifications of their organs, depending in a chain of certain effects upon the operations of the Almighty; then he muſt be eſteemed the author and approver of thoſe follies and wickedneſs, for which he made the proviſion of cauſes with knowledge and intention of the evil fruits they ſhould produce. Which to imagine, would be the higheſt offence againſt his holineſs and juſtice, as repreſenting the worſt of crimes approved of by him, and puniſhment inflicted for faults whereunto he had led the tranſgreſſor by the workings of his providence. Beſides, as we have all along inſiſted upon a difference in actions,

ſome drawing down the bleſſings and others the vengeance of heaven upon our heads, we contradict ourſelves egregiouſly in maintaining an opinion from whence it may be inferred that the moſt atrocious villainies are equally agreeable to God, and alike the object of his counſels, with the moſt conſummate virtues. But this crying injury to his holy name we ſhall uſe our beſt endeavours to prevent, and at the ſame time to reconcile the contradictions charged upon our ſyſtem.

6. Now in order to do this, let us endeavour to lay down in one view the ſeveral parts of our ſyſtem, as formed by the deciſions of our underſtanding when in her utmoſt ſtretch of contemplation; or as calculated to model our imagination for directing us in the conduct of life. By which will appear that the ſeeming contradictions and evil conſequences apprehended in it, are only variations of language, and lights of placing things in, neceſſary for accommodating them to the different capacities of ſenſitive-rational animals. We have found it expedient in our Chapter upon that article, and upon ſeveral occaſions ſince, to repreſent God under two characters, as Creator, and as Governor of the Univerſe. In the former of thoſe capacities he is incomprehenſible, nor can we ſafely affirm any thing concerning his proceedings, the manner of them, or counſels directing them. We know he has interſperſed a mixture of evil among his works,

works, and though I have ſuggeſted very probable grounds to hope the quantity of it is inconceivably ſmall in proportion to the good, yet that there is ſome, we feel daily by unwelcome experience: from hence we may preſume the nature of things originally ſo conſtituted, as that the little ſprinkling of evil was made neceſſary to ſupport and ſecure the greater good.

But God in his capacity of Governor deſcends nearer to our comprehenſion: we may imagine him ruling with unwearied infinite goodneſs, a little reſtrained by the neceſſity he had impoſed upon himſelf at the creation, but watchful to employ his power and wiſdom for preventing the growth of evil beyond that neceſſity in any ſingle inſtance, and impartial to diſtribute it in exact meaſure among all his creatures. In this view of his government it appears his eye never terminates upon evil, but regards it only as a means to work out the greater good he graciouſly purpoſes to procure: and this is the only view wherein we can behold him, our optics being not ſuited to diſcern him in his work of creation. There may be creatures of more exalted intelligence endowed with faculties capacious enough to comprehend the original conſtitution of nature, to diſcover and contemplate Attributes unknown and unthought of by us. But their doctrine upon theſe matters would be unintelligible to the acuteſt of us, who are but as vulgar in compariſon with them, and therefore

fore muſt content ourſelves with what they might regard as exoterics. Yet this inferior doctrine, I mean inferior with reſpect to other natures, is ſtill too high to ſerve for our common uſe; ſo that we muſt divide it into that we may entertain in the cloſet, and that we ſhall find portable to carry about upon common occaſions. And we ſhall begin with the former as being the ſtandard to regulate, and foundation whereon to conſtruct the other.

7. The value of meaſures and quality of actions muſt be denominated from the whole amount of the fruits to be produced by them. The fond mother that indulges her child in every fooliſh fancy, does him hurt, although ſhe procures him a preſent pleaſure, becauſe it is attended with miſchievous conſequences. And the prudent Parent who ſends his ſon away from the eaſe and conveniencies of home to the diſcipline and hardſhips of a ſchool, does him a kindneſs, though he drives him into a diſagreeable and painful road, becauſe it will lead to his accompliſhment, his credit, and his greater enjoyment, when he comes out into the world. And in general, whatever we do to another however immediately pleaſing, yet if we do it with intention to bring on miſchief greater than the pleaſure we give, it muſt be counted an act of malice. As on the other hand whatever we do troubleſome or painful, yet if done with intention to procure greater benefit to the party, it is

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an inſtance of kindneſs and goodneſs. Theſe then being the grounds whereon we make an eſtimation of our own actions, we can employ none other in eſtimating the divine: for as has been often remarked before, we can form no conception of God unleſs from archetypes found within ourſelves. For this reaſon he is incomprehenſible in his character of Creator, becauſe we have nothing in our proceedings at all ſimilar to the production of a ſubſtance, to the aſſigning primary properties, or conſtituting the relations between one thing and another. Our employment lies in obſerving the things about us, their qualities, their relations to our well or ill being, and from thence contriving the methods requiſite for attaining our purpoſes.

Upon this narrow bottom of experience we may raiſe an idea of our provident and beneficent Governor, whom we may conceive proceeding upon a conſtitution of things already eſtabliſhed, capable of admitting an inexhauſtible and boundleſs ſtream of happineſs, but not without a ſmall mixture of evil made neceſſary to introduce it. We may apprehend him not, like ourſelves, circumſcribed within a little ſphere of limited knowledge, but omniſcient to diſcern diſtinctly all the ſubſtances exiſting, the ſituations they might be placed in, the mutual affections that might enſue upon their application to one another: and compleatly wiſe, to underſtand the effect of every motion and operation among them,

them, of every combination of motions, and operations among them all, and look through every ſucceſſion of cauſes to their remoteſt conſequences. We may then figure to ourſelves this infinite wiſdom employed by infinite goodneſs to contrive a plan of nature, wherein all the good poſſible for the creatures ſhould be contained, all methods put in uſe for enhancing their happineſs, not excepting ſuch evils from whence a far greater good might be marked out, and none admitted which will not redound to ſome ſignal benefit of the creation.

In this idea of divine Providence we ſhall find nothing unbecoming a wiſe and gracious Governor, nor are thoſe proviſions made for the evils interſperſed among his works, an impeachment of his goodneſs: for being made with a view to the good whereof they are neceſſarily productive, they fall properly under the denomination of acts of kindneſs and beneficence; It will perhaps be ſaid that all this may account for the introduction of natural evil into the ſyſtem of Providence, but does not reconcile us to the proviſion of motives drawing into moral evil, upon which the difficulty principally aroſe. But let us conſider that the very exiſtence of moral evil depends upon natural: for we could do no wrong if we could do nothing wherefrom ſome hurt or damage or diſpleaſure might accrue either to ourſelves or any other beſides. Therefore natural evil being the ground which gives ſcope to moral, it will be worth while to beſtow ſome par-

particular conſideration upon the former, whereby to gather light for diſcovering the conſiſtency of the latter with wiſdom and goodneſs.

8. Evils whereof we have any experience or comprehenſion may be ranged under two claſſes, Inevitable, and Avoidable: and each of theſe ſubdivided again into two ſpecies, diſtinguiſhable by the channels through which they fall upon us. Inevitable evils are either thoſe we are ſubjected to by the conſtitution of our nature, as the infirmities of age, diſeaſes, and complaints occaſioned by unwholeſome airs or variations of weather, or elſe thoſe whereto our ignorance of the means proper for preventing them renders us liable, ſuch as ſudden deaths, maimings or other bodily hurts by the ſtroke of lightning, which any body might eaſily eſcape, if he could but always know the particular ſpot, where the lightning will fall. Of avoidable evils, which nevertheleſs we do not avoid, ſome are prudential, ſuch as labour, troubles, ſelf-denials undergone voluntarily for the ſake of ſome advantage to be gained thereby: others punitory, which we draw upon ourſelves by our ill conduct and wilful miſmanagement.

And theſe ſeveral kinds of evils may ſpring from one another: for a man by his debaucheries may contract diſeaſes he cannot afterwards get rid of; or by intemperance may ſo weaken his faculties that he ſhall not diſcern the dangers he might eaſily have avoided; or by extravagance reduce himſelf to ſuch poverty as that it ſhall

ſhall become prudent to ſubmit to drudgery and hardſhips for his ſuſtenance and ſupport. In theſe caſes the neceſſity rendring evil prudential, the diſtemper and ignorance ſubjecting to inevitable evil, may be ranked under the claſs of punitory, as on the other hand the latter may be ſtiled prudential, when inflicted to ſecure peace, and good order, and the benefits of ſociety.

9. It is an ancient and prevailing opinion that all phyſical evil was the effect of moral. Many orthodox divines hold that evil firſt entered into nature upon the rebellion of Lucifer, and was introduced into theſe ſublunary regions by the ſin of Man: for that the earth in its paradiſiacal ſtate had nothing of pain, diſeaſe, uneaſineſs, or trouble belonging to it. We have found ſo much in confirmation of this latter notion as to make it highly probable, that if mankind could once totally clear themſelves of their attachment to preſent pleaſure, their impotence of reſiſting deſire, their indolence, and their ſelfiſhneſs, they might by their united endeavours quickly relieve themſelves from all intolerable evils: and againſt what remained, they might arm themſelves with ſuch a temper of mind, as ſhould change its nature, making it ceaſe to be evil by drawing out its ſting, and rendering it incapable of hurting them.

But though by theſe means they might reſtore a paradiſe upon earth, yet it is much to be doubted whether this paradiſe would extend to

the brute creation. One may imagine, and but barely imagine, that the ſagacity of man, improved and exerted to the utmoſt, might enure the lions and wolves to live upon dead carcaſes, without worrying their brother animals: but one cannot even imagine how any human ſkill and induſtry could ever diſcipline the fiſh, or the inſects, ſo that the pike ſhould no longer be the terror of the lake, nor the ſhark reign as tyrant of the deep, nor the dolphin tire down the flying fiſh, nor the ſpider entangle the heedleſs fly in his texture, and then deſtroy him with a lingering and painful death. But it is ſaid the animals were mild, gentle and innocent at the beginning: ſporting the lion ramp'd, and in his paws dandled the kid, bears, ounces, tygers, pards gambol'd before them: until their natures were changed upon the diſobedience of man, for whoſe ſake God curſed the ground with all its produce and inhabitants. Which brings the wants, pains, diſtreſſes, as well among brutes as men, under the idea of punitory.

There is likewiſe a heterodox notion tending to the ſame concluſion, which ſuppoſes a pre-exiſtent ſtate, wherein the ſpirits of men and animals, by the wrong uſe of the powers and liberty they then enjoyed, have made themſelves obnoxious to the ſufferings they now endure. Thus we find that men of different perſuaſions in other reſpects have agreed in aſcribing phyſical evil to moral, as its cauſe and origin.

And

And this if it were fully eſtabliſhed, would give us a more favourable opinion of our exiſtence: for it is ſome conſolation to know, there are no evils in nature abſolutely inevitable, and it leaves room to hope, that we may ſome time or other attain a competent knowledge and ſtrength of mind ſufficient to ſecure us againſt every miſchief.

Beſides it is more eaſy to comprehend how the ſufferings for wrong doing may be productive of the good we have ſuppoſed in a former place reſulting therefrom, than inevitable miſchiefs: becauſe they will naturally ſpur on thoſe creatures, who have knowledge of the cauſes they flow from, to uſe their activity in practiſing the methods requiſite for eſcaping them; whereas what is abſolutely unavoidable can have no influence upon the conduct. Yet it muſt be acknowledged, that in caſe either of hurts conſequent upon faults committed in a pre-exiſtent ſtate, or of miſeries brought upon animals by the wickedneſs of man, they do not yield a profitable fruit to the creatures ſuffering: therefore, ſince we have laid down that every evil is productive of good ſomewhere or other, the benefit muſt redound to ſome other creatures. Which may ſerve as an argument to prove the connection of intereſts between the viſible world, and the inviſible.

10. But

10. But were neither of the before-mentioned hypotheſes to be admitted, yet it is notorious that one creature often profits by the hurts and labours of another, and ſuffers by the faults of another. We find it neceſſary to ſlaughter animals for our ſuſtenance, and put them to ſevere drudgeries in our ſervice. In return we are forced to toil and trouble in the care of creatures uſeful to us: there are inſects which prey upon our fleſh, our blood, and our vitals, perhaps in greater multitudes than we are aware of; ſome diſeaſes, and it has been imagined all of them, proceeding from an imperceptible vermin ſwarming within us. Theſe inſtances may corroborate our opinion of the general connexion, and afford a ſtrong preſumption that the miſchiefs which do not contribute to the benefit of any creatures we ſee, contribute to that of others we do not ſee: and what we have obſerved before concerning the divine equity, enſures to every individual his proportionable ſhare of the good and evil he brings upon others.

Such conſiderations duly attended to, might ſilence the clamours of thoſe freethinkers who urge the abſurdity of our being puniſhed for crimes whereof we are not conſcious, or of the innocent ſuffering for the wickedneſs of the guilty. Becauſe, ſay they, ſuch ſeverities can do us no good, as neither directing us what to do, or what to avoid, nor encouraging us to purſue one courſe of behaviour, rather than ano-

ther. But though it ſhould do us nō good, how can they know it may not prove an example and direction to other Beings, or to ourſelves in ſome other form of Being, when we may have faculties to caſt a retroſpect, not only upon our ſufferings, but likewiſe upon the prior conduct, that brought us obnoxious to them? Correction of the offender and reſtraint of vice among mankind is one end of puniſhment, but not the ſole nor the principal: for we ſtand as a ſpectacle to other creatures, whoſe numbers are greater, and intereſt more important than our own. For they having a full diſcernment of the general intereſt and the divine equity, will ſee that evil cannot befal any where without a diminution of happineſs in the univerſe, and conſequently in the ſhare of every member compoſing it: therefore will look upon our ſufferings as a damage to themſelves, which will give them the proper effect of puniſhment, creating an averſion againſt the practices occaſioning them, as being detrimental to all in general.

Having found reaſons for aſcribing the origin of all pain and ſuffering to the miſconduct either of the party enduring them, or of others to whom he ſtands in ſome reſpect related, it remains next to enquire into the riſe of moral evil. Whenever we do wrong, we are prompted thereto by the impulſe of ſome deſire, appearing more ſatisfactory to our apprehenſion than the dictates of judgment, or conſcience. For it has been

been ſhewn in the courſe of this work, that the mind acts conſtantly upon motives; ſuch as they are, ſuch preciſely her action is: nor is this inconſiſtent with free will, which depends upon the abſence of all impediment againſt the operations of the mind taking effect upon her own volitions, but not at all upon the cauſes influencing her to operate. But all motives are perceptions wherein the mind is purely paſſive, being acted upon by the mechanical motions of our organization ſtriking the preceptions upon her: and this alike as well in our deliberate or voluntary, as in our inadvertent or ſpontaneous thoughts. For whether I play upon an organ myſelf, or have one that will play by clock work, ſtill it is the mechanical motions of the keys, the air paſſing through the pipes, and undulations coming from thence, that impreſs perceptions of the ſound upon my mind: and if the organ be out of order, I cannot procure perfect muſic either way: whence it appears that the behaviour of man depends upon the condition of his mental organization.

Now to account for the diſorder of our machine let us take the orthodox ſcheme, and ſuppoſe that as a man by his debaucheries may entail diſeaſes upon his children, which ſhall continue from generation to generation, ſo the ſin of our firſt parents worked ſuch a diſtemperature into their interior frame, as ſpoiled the conſtitution of their poſterity ever ſince. We

muſt look then for the origin of our own depravity in the firſt fatal ſtep of our primogenitors: and we ſhall find that to have proceeded from their ignorant ſimplicity, and the temptation thrown in their way; cauſes antecedent to the act of tranſgreſſing.

God had prohibited their eating the fruit of the tree in the midſt of the garden upon pain of death, and it does not appear they would have ever entertained a thought of tranſgreſſing of themſelves, but if the fruit at any time had chanced to catch their eyes, they would inſtantly have taken them off to ſome other object. But the ſerpent ſaid unto the woman, Ye ſhall not ſurely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil. It is not neceſſary to ſuppoſe the woman immediately believed the ſerpent, or was willing to take his word rather than God's: but what ſhe heard perplexed her; for being wholly unexperienced in falſhood, ſhe had no notion of any ſuch thing. Suſpicion could not enter her thoughts, as having never had a cauſe in any thing happening before to alarm it, ſhe had always been uſed to look upon every thing as true that was told her, and now to be told that the fruit was of excellent quality, and that God himſelf knew it to be ſo, when he had before declared it mortal, muſt throw her into an utter aſtoniſhment. In theſe circumſtances it

was natural for her to conſider attentively that fruit which was the ſubject of her aſtoniſhment, if perchance ſomething might be diſcovered therein to diſentangle the perplexity: we all do ſo upon the like occaſion, nor can one find any thing blameable in the procedure.

Thus far then here was no guilt nor diſobedience, no wrong turn of the will: but being thus innocently drawn to fix an earneſt attention upon the tree, ſhe ſaw that it was good for food, and that it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe. That is, her looks dwelling upon the tree, and her thoughts upon the ſuggeſtions of the ſerpent, introduced ſtronger ideas of the deliciouſneſs of the fruit and deſirableneſs of wiſdom, than ſhe had ever known before, ſhe had already eaten other fruits, and had found their ſweetneſs and their wholſomeneſs correſpond with the fairneſs of their appearance; from whence ſhe had gotten an appetite giving a preference to whatever looked ripe and blooming. She had ſeen Adam give names to all the animals expreſſive of their natures, and no doubt had known many other inſtances of his knowledge being ſuperior to hers. They had both had perpetual occaſion to contemplate the wiſdom and omniſcience of God manifeſted in the admirable ſtructure and contrivance of his works. But this admiration of wiſdom was no more than a cool judgment of its excellency, and the advantage of poſſeſſing

higher degrees of knowledge rather than lower, without creating a deſire of raiſing their faculties above the preſent pitch, which they had no proſpect of effecting: and their appetite being abundantly ſatisfied with the foods allowed them, could never grow to a vehement craving.

But now the woman, beguiled by the artifice of the ſerpent, beheld the delicious fruit and the preſent means ſuggeſted of attaining a godlike wiſdom, with deſire, yet being withholden from eating by the prohibition, deſire, as it will naturally do while entertained in the thoughts without being gratified, grew more and more importunate. Still we do not find any thing to blame in her; ſhe had indeed committed a fatal error, but we cannot call it a misbehaviour, for ſhe was not apprized of her danger, nor knew the conſequences of ſuffering the ſenſitive part to gather head above the rational. Her cloſe attention to the fruit and its pretended virtues, was not an idle curioſity nor a criminal indulgence, but an honeſt attempt to get information upon the doubts that perplexed her.

12. But deſire being grown exorbitant, her reflection on the command to abſtain became uneaſy to her; which [illegible]neſs got hold on the Will, influencing [illegible] ſtifling the reflecti[illegible] upon the allurem[illegible] means bringing h[illegible] wiſhed it were tru[illegible]

ſaid that right, and that God was not in earneſt when he made the denunciation. In this manner the conceive ſin entered into the world beginning in a wilful infidelity, which is always accompanied with a like wilful partiality to ſome fond paſſion or appetite; and this was the firſt wrong election the woman made; or in the language of ſome people, the firſt abuſe of her power of indifferency, whereby ſhe annexed the idea of good to an act of diſobedience: and then the judgement being perverted, no wonder it led her to practiſe that, which now appeared the Beſt; ſo ſhe took of the fruit thereof and did eat. And when ſhe gave alſo unto her husband with her and he did eat, we may preſume he was prevailed on by the like proceſs as ſhe had been.

Thus we ſee the free-will of our anceſtors warped to a wrong bias in the ſame manner as ours is, namely, by deſire catching away the idea of ſatisfaction from judgement, and conſcience: for when the urgency of deſire becomes ſo preſſing as to create an intolerable uneaſineſs, it makes preſent gratification appear preferable to remote good or rectitude, and gains the conſent of the Will to an action known and diſcerned to be wrong. But the ſteps by which deſire roſe to this urgency proceeded from antecedent and external cauſes: to wit, the original formation of the woman, when the rib was faſhioned into a machinery wherein the ſenſitive paſſions were made capable of ſtriking colours

too ſtrong for the rational to counterbalance; her artleſs ſimplicity unapprized of the danger, and unacquainted with the quality of external allurements to raiſe a violence in the organs by their repeated action, and the malice of the ſerpent to take a baſe advantage of her weakneſs and innocence.

If we go on further to trace the riſe of this malice in the ſerpent, or the wicked ſpirit poſſeſſing it, we muſt aſcribe it to the perverſeneſs worked into his nature by his fall from an angel of light. It would be too bold to pronounce any thing confidently concerning angels, or their manner of Action, but if we will reaſon at all about them, we muſt employ our own ideas; and it is ſcarce poſſible te conceive that an angel enjoying the beatific viſion, exempt from paſſion or frailty, and having a perfect underſtanding, ſhould ever think of rebelling againſt Omnipotence. Therefore when he entertained this thought, he muſt have been in a ſtate of ignorance and error, an overweening conceit of his own excellence and power; and have fallen from his angelic intelligence before he fell from his allegiance. Nor is it conceivable that he ſhould have thrown away any part of his intelligence voluntarily, but was reduced to error and darkneſs by ſome proviſion of cauſes working an effect neceſſary with reſpect to him: agreeably to that ancient ſaying, whom Jove would deſtroy, he firſt infatuates.

Upon

Upon our hypotheſis of the Mundane Soul, each component ſpirit in its ſtate of abſorption having communication of perceptions with the reſt, muſt know the qualities of matter and effect of a vital union therewith to introduce moral and phyſical evil: therefore cannot be imagined to immerſe itſelf therein of choice or through ignorance. But when a diſcerption happens, it muſt be brought about by the duſt of the ground or ſome corporeal particles being moulded into organization, and the ſpirit being breathed thereinto, as the breath of life, whereby the whole compoſition, bodily, and ſpiritual, will become a living ſoul or animal. Now whether we ſuppoſe this diſcerption effected by divine agency, or certain laws of nature eſtabliſhed for that purpoſe, or that the Mundane Soul, diſcerning the neceſſity of immerſed ſpirits to ſupport its own happineſs, withdraws its communication from thoſe to whoſe turn it comes in rotation to undergo the burden of this public ſervice; or that the ſpirits themſelves, ſenſible of that neceſſity and the equitableneſs of ſharing their proportion in the evil as well as the good, undertake the taſk when falling to their lot, without reluctance: ſtill we ſhall find an innocent ignorance and imbecility, and the mechanical operations of a material organization to be the cauſes preceding the firſt taint of moral evil in them.

Or

Or whatever other pre-exiſtent ſcheme you adopt, yet you muſt always allow the creatures to have been good and upright before their firſt wilful misbehaviour, whereby they worked a debaſement in their nature: for elſe you will aſcribe their defect of goodneſs directly to the author of their nature. But during their ſtate of goodneſs and uprightneſs, it would be quite out of character to ſuppoſe them doing any thing coolly, deliberately, and knowingly, to put themſelves out of this ſtate: therefore they muſt either have been drawn unwittingly into an immerſion in matter, by ſteps the conſequences of which they were not aware of; or there muſt have been ſome preſſing deſire or uneaſineſs raiſed in them without their own agency, rendering preſent gratification and eaſe more ſatisfactory, than the practice of what they know to be right.

But if you reject all the foregoing hypotheſes, and inſiſt upon children being born in the original innocence of the grandmother Eve, we ſhall ſtill find evil introduced among them by the ſame proceſs. We came into the world little different from Brutes, without idea of right and wrong, having ſenſe and appetite for the guides of our conduct, and juſtified in following them becauſe deſtitute of any other. Reaſon is not reckoned to open until ſeven years old: but without aſcertaining the preciſe time, it is certainly much younger than deſire which having gotten

gotten the ſtart in growth becomes too vigorous for it to controul. So that when reaſon begins to operate, it can only diſcover what is right without raiſing an appetite ſufficient to make us purſue it: unleſs by good management of parents, or good fortune, ſome paſſion or deſire can be brought to aſſiſt in overpowering the reſt. And if any one denies that it is ſome deſire, whoſe riſing in the mind was not our own act, which prompts us in every failure of our duty. Let him produce an inſtance wherein any man refuſes to do what in his clear judgement he diſcerns to be right; when he apprehends nothing diſagreeable in the performance, and no inclination or habit leads a contrary way: or ever ſhuts his eyes againſt reaſon, without a previous ſuſpicion that it would direct him to ſomething he does not like.

13. Thus in all the avenues through which we can imagine ſin to enter among the creatures, we find it introduced by a proviſion of cauſes made previouſly to its entrance: and the whole progreſs tracing it backwards, ſeems to have been as follows. Things were ſo conſtituted at the creation as that a certain quantity of ſuffering was made neceſſary to the enjoyments of the perceptive Beings created. Our gracious Governor on forming his univerſal plan of Providence, interſperſed the requiſite mixture of ſuffering therein, for the ſake of that unſpeakable happineſs that ſhould be worked out thereby: yet

yet he would not inflict it with his own hand, but choſe rather ſo to order his courſes of nature and fortune, as that it ſhould enſue in conſequence of wilful misbehaviour among the creatures. Yet neither would he impel them to miſbehave, but placed them in ſuch circumſtances of ignorance and imbecility as ſhould influence them by the urgency of motives to chooſe freely what they knew to be wrong. Nor perhaps were this ignorance and imbecility brought on by a chain of neceſſary cauſes, but he may have given his perfect ſpirits ſuch diſcernment as to ſee the expedience of driving one another thereinto; or undertaking it voluntarily out of an equitable diſpoſition, not covetous of engroſſing the whole of happineſs to themſelves, in which caſe we ſhall find the cauſes of moral evil derive their origin from prudence and duty, and the moſt exalted public ſpirit.

I have promiſed to build nothing upon hypotheſis, therefore ſhall not purſue this laſt ſuppoſition to any conſequences that might be drawn from it as from a certain fact: nevertheleſs I may employ it as an imaginary caſe, to ſhew how the ſteps conducting to moral evil might be taken without imputation of unholineſs. For if the ſpirits while in the perfect ſtate, involve one another or themſelves in a dangerous ignorance and imbecility whenever equity requires, in contemplation of the miſchiefs to be incurred thereby being neceſſary to the good of the commu-

nity,

nity, we cannot rank this view under the denomination of malice, or envy, or ſenſuality, or any other kind of unholineſs. In like manner, ſhould we ſuppoſe the imperfection brought on by a chain of neceſſary cauſes, deriving from the firſt diſpoſition of Providence made with the ſame view, neither ſhall we thereby charge the diſpoſer of events with unholineſs.

For let us take the points in the line of this view ſeverally in order: the creatures in their original conſtitution, were made capable of an immenſe enjoyment: but this enjoyment was not worked into their natures as a primary property, it was to be the effect of an application of ſome means employed to excite it in them. This happineſs then we muſt regard as the ultimate point whereon the view of Providence terminates, and proceeds next to the means whereby it might be effected: but a certain proportion of ſuffering being among the requiſite means, if the plan had been ſo ordered as that the exact meaſure ſhould have been brought on by neceſſary cauſes, or even by immediate exertions of omnipotence, theſe would have been acts of kindneſs by the rule laid down in § 7. Where then is the difference upon ſuffering being made punitory inſtead of inevitable? The weight of it is the ſame from whatever cauſes ariſing, or through whatever channels deriving: and it is this weight that makes wrong doing to be what it is, for nothing is wrong that has not

a ten-

a tendency to ſome damage. Thus moral evil, as we have obſerved in a former place, were no evil if there were no natural: and is no greater than the miſchiefs whereof it may be productive. Where then the miſchiefs produced are acts of kindneſs, and conſtantly conſiſtent with perfect goodneſs: the introduction of moral evil neceſſary to produce them, will fall under the ſame denomination, and conſequently be conſiſtent with perfect holineſs. But what is apt to ſcandalize us upon this topic is, that holineſs in ourſelves being a moral ſenſe and habit, we cannot do a wrong thing knowingly, even for the ſake of ſome ſignal profit to accrue therefrom, without making a breach into the authority of our moral ſenſe and ſtrength of our habit, thereby loſing our holineſs, and ſetting an example, that may endanger the miſchief to ſpread further than we intended. From hence we conceive the like of God: and becauſe it is our duty to be holy as he is holy, we ſuppoſe holineſs the ſame thing in him, as it is in us. Whereas we ſhould conſider that his holineſs is not an effect of moral ſenſes or habits, preventing the growth of a depravity which can never take root in him: but a branch of his wiſdom and goodneſs, diſcerning and inclining him to the things moſt beneficial for his creatures. Therefore whenever theſe Attributes point to moral evil as ultimately productive of their benefit, he can make proviſion for it without departing from his holineſs, or endan-

endangering conſequences he does not deſign. For he ſees all the receſſes of the heart, knows all the ſprings of action, and has the forming and marſhalling of all cauſes at his diſpoſal: therefore can ſay to iniquity as he does to the ſea, hitherto ſhall thy proud waves come but no further; ſo may break down the bounds any where to let in an inundation, without hazard of its ſpreading ever ſo little further than requiſite to anſwer his gracious purpoſes.

14. It has been often remarked, upon obſervation of the courſe of events in this world, that croſſes, afflictions, and misfortunes, turn out to the advantage of the perſons falling under them, or of others; and that good frequently ſprings out from evil of both kinds. Treatiſes have been written to ſhew that private vices are public benefits; and though they have juſtly given offence by the ſubject being handled in ſuch a manner as to make it appear an encouragement to vice, yet the fact cannot well be denied by an impartial obſerver. But when we come to examine how vice produces any benefit, we ſhall always find it to be by checking or counterbalancing the effect of ſome other more pernicious vice: ſo it muſt make work for itſelf, and can never do good until it has done the miſchief, which by a contrary ſpecies of depravity it may afterwards rectify. Thus if there were no covetouſneſs there would need no extravagance; if there were no careleſſneſs there would be

be no want of theft, and cheating, to keep men vigilant; if they had not pride and vanity, there would be no uſe for cenſoriouſneſs, and calumny which ſerve to mortify them; if the world was without bigotry, it would have no occaſion for free-thinking; if there was not canting and terrifying in Religion, no good could come of profane ſwearing or ſcoffing. And the like may be ſaid of loſſes and misfortunes, whoſe benefit is only to awaken our indolence and thoughtleſsneſs, to curb ſome preſumption, or rub off the ruſt that had gathered upon us by long eaſe and proſperity.

Thus how much ſoever particular vices may prove advantageous as mankind ſtands circumſtanced, yet vice in general is wholly pernicious: and if they could once get entirely clear of it, they would never want its help, nor any of thoſe troubles, pains, diſeaſes, and ſiniſter accidents, whoſe ſervice lies in correcting it. Therefore ſo far as our judgement may decide in the matter, we may conclude that moral and phyſical evil upon the whole contribute nothing to the benefit of mankind, but our condition would be much better, were both of them totally baniſhed from among us. Nor can we doubt the power and wiſdom of God to have excluded them: a terreſtrial ſtate exempt from them both, is not repugnant to our ideas, as appears from the many deſcriptions given of a paradiſe, or golden age.

But

But the infinite goodneſs of our Almighty Governor, void of neither love nor mercy to any of his works, is now univerſally received as an article both of orthodox and philoſophical faith: we have endeavoured to confirm it in the courſe of this work by arguments drawn from experience and obſervation, and to ſhew that it would be blaſpheming his holy name to ſuppoſe his views ever terminating upon evil. Since then evil is admitted into that part of his ſyſtem of Providence reſpecting ourſelves, and yet does not terminate in our benefit, it ſeems neceſſarily to follow, that there is a connexion of intereſts between the viſible world and the inviſible, between the human ſpecies and higher orders of Beings: ſo that all the troubles of this life and miſeries of the next, incurred by wickedneſs committed here, redound to the far greater benefit of other creatures, for elſe they would have been prevented, or remedied. How this benefit accrues therefrom, it may not be poſſible for us to explain, but that ſome ſignal benefit does accrue, we may be convinced by the foregoing conſiderations.

And from what has been argued in former Chapters concerning the divine Equity, it follows, that whatever tends to the advantage of the univerſe, tends ſome time or other, to the advantage of every individual contained therein, and conſequently of the ſufferer himſelf. Thus if all ſuffering be an evil of the punitory kind

with reſpect to the creatures, it is all of the prudential with reſpect to their Governor: and a meaſure of prudence can never be deemed repugnant to holineſs. So that when we ſpeak of the formation of the plan of Providence, we may conclude in the ſame ſtyle as Moſes did of the creation. The Lord comprized therein all thoſe treaſures of happineſs whereof his perceptive creatures were capable: and he interſperſed ſo much pain and ſuffering, but not a jot more, as was neceſſary to work out that happineſs: and he admitted ſuch ſtreams of moral evil as ſhould bring on that pain and ſuffering, confining them within certain ſtated bounds, that they ſhould not in any wiſe overflow further than he purpoſed: and he made proviſion of cauſes for ignorance and imbecility, juſt ſufficient to open the ſluices of thoſe ſtreams. And the Lord looked upon the whole form of the plan that he had contrived, and upon every line, and ſpot, and point thereof, and behold it was very good: And he gave motions to his material, and ideas to his ſpiritual ſubſtances, to carry on the exact ſucceſſion of events he had ordained. And the Lord reſted from his work, until the appointed times ſhould arrive, according to the vacant ſpaces left purpoſely in his plan, wherein he had before determined to interpoſe with his own hand for manifeſtation of his power and of his dominion to his intelligent creatures.

15. By placing things in this light, I think we may reconcile the ſyſtem of Providence to our ideas of goodneſs and holineſs: the whole difficulty being now thrown off upon the original conſtitution of ſubſtances, whereby good was made neceſſarily dependant upon a mixture of evil. And this it is no wonder we do not underſtand, being a work of creation, whereof we have not faculties to diſcern any thing diſtinctly. For creation, and the firſt eſtabliſhment of the nature of things with their mutual relations, is a pure act, having nothing prior whereon to ground the meaſures of it. But we have no conception of a pure act proceeding without intelligence, I mean, intelligence ſuch in kind as our own, that is, a diſcernment of objects, relations, and truths, already exiſting: whereas unleſs we will give into the abſurdity of two Firſt Cauſes, we cannot admit any objects, or relations, or truths ſubſiſting independantly on the Creator, or prior to his eſtabliſhment of them. Therefore we muſt take the primary properties of ſubſtances, and nature of things as we find them, without ſpending ourſelves in fruitleſs enquiries after their origin: and may reſt abundantly ſatisfied with the diſpoſition thereof by our all-wiſe Governor, whom we may acknowledge, upon the foregoing repreſentation made of his proviſions, ordering all things for the beſt, to be infinitely gracious, beneficent, and holy.

If any very righteous perſon ſhall take offence at our ranking the Cauſes influencing to moral evil among the proviſions of heaven, let him remember that the like is done more directly in the ſacred writings, where mention is made of hardening Pharaoh's heart, and of tempting men upon other occaſions. Add to this, that we are inſtructed in our daily prayers to petition that God would not lead us into temptation, which implies that he ſometimes does: for it would be an abſurdity and mockery to pray, that the moon and ſtars might not fall upon our heads, that the ground we ſtand on might not loſe its ſolidity ſo as to let us drop through to the centre, or for averting any other miſchief whereof there is not ſome hazard that it might befall. But are we not forbidden to ſay, when temptations aſſail us, that we are tempted of God, or to think otherwiſe than that we are drawn aſide by our own luſts? And is it not repugnant to reaſon, and natural Religion to imagine him the author of ſin, or approver of all the follies and wickedneſs abounding among mankind? Muſt not ſuch a notion prove ſubverſive of all morality, and introductive of a general licentiouſneſs miſrule and confuſion?

This I never meant to deny, and therefore would not have ſuch thoughts entertained in our imagination. But we have ſhewn by ſeveral inſtances in the preceding Chapters, that imagination is too groſs or too ſcanty to take in the whole

whole circle of objects diſcernible by underſtanding; that it would be miſchievous or highly inconvenient, if not impracticable, to conceive of ſome things in all particulars wherein we may know them to be true: and that there is one ſet of ideas proper for contemplations of the cloſet, but another very different, better ſuited to direct us in our ordinary conduct. I ſhall now attempt an examination of the exoteric doctrines upon this article, which we may conveniently carry about for our own common uſe, and may communicate ſafely to all comers, without ſo much hazard of miſleading, or being miſapprehended, as we might have been liable to, in the others.

16. A univerſal Providence, extending to all minuteſt events happening throughout the world, is by much too large an idea for us to contain: we are quickly bewildered in that infinite variety of complicated cauſes concurring to almoſt every production, and loſt in the length of operations ſucceeding one another from the beginning of every chain, therefore content ourſelves with contemplating one, or a few near cauſes moſt material for us to take notice of. The fall of Troy is commonly aſcribed to the inveiglements of Paris and elopement of Helen: but the conſtitution of the Grecian and Trojan ſtates, their alliances, their military diſcipline, natural ſtrength and proweſs, the political artifices employed to bring them together, and innumerable other

cauſes, were concurring to compleat the cataſtrophe. Nor are we ſhorter in computing the multitude, than tracing the length of our cauſes.

Horace blames the poet who ſhould begin the Trojan war from Leda's Egg, yet it muſt be owned the mother's education or example, the effects of whatever amour was figured by the celeſtial ſwan, and former precedents of ſtealing away ladies from foreign countries, might be the prior cauſes of Helen's elopement. And the condition and diſcipline of the powers engaged, depended upon the birth and breeding given to the combatants by their parents, upon the acts of former heroes and legiſlators, upon the manner of their firſt ſettlements in colonies, and other higher ſources, which it would be neither needful nor practicable for us to inveſtigate.

Nor are we leſs confined in our proſpect of effects than of cauſes: we reckon the conſequences of Helen's infidelity to terminate in the deſtruction of Ilium, the ruin and diſperſion of its inhabitants; but what further effects this diſperſion had upon other countries, we do not take into account nor can fully eſtimate. If it be true that Eneas laid the firſt foundations of the Roman empire from whoſe aſhes our modern kingdoms are ſprung, it will appear highly probable that our own condition at this day would have been very different from what it is, whether better or worſe we cannot tell, if Helen had been

been more diſcreet. Thus the circle of our viſion ſtands circumſcribed on all ſides; our diſcernment into the courſes of events has but ſcanty bounds both in length and breadth; we can neither count the threads whereof they are contexted, nor trace them to the beginning, or to the end.

So that our views of nature are like the map of an inland country, where you ſee rivers without any ſources, continually diſcharging their waters without a ſea to receive them; roads that you know not from whence they come, nor whither they conduct; mountains, foreſts, and plains cut off in the middle by the marginal lines of your paper. In like manner we are forced to divide the plan of Providence into many little plans proportionable to the ſcale of our imagination or extent of our diſcernment, each whereof we contemplate ſingly at a time; taking whatever lies at the top of them for original cauſes, and all we find at the bottom for ultimate ends. For we conſider properties in compound bodies, motions in the elements, in vegetable and animal organizations, without thinking of the ſources from which they derived, we find deſigns and deſires riſe in our minds, without knowing from whence they came: and we regard the effect theſe things may have upon our well or ill being, or relative to our uſes, without diving into further conſequences, wherein we have no apparent concern.

By this means our ſyſtem becomes replete with multitudes of agents and powers, appearing to us as original ſources of events, and which may be ranged under three general claſſes, Nature, Chance, and Freewill. We acknowledge indeed that all theſe powers lie under the continual inſpection and controul of our ſupreme Governor, who turns them by the ſecret workings of his Providence, operating in a manner unaccountable by us, to anſwer ſuch purpoſes as in his wiſdom he judges proper. Now when we come to enquire what theſe purpoſes muſt be, we can think them none other than ſuch as are good, and gracious, and beneficent: for it is repugnant to our ideas to imagine any malice, or envy, or iniquity, or ſenſuality, or other unholineſs in the character of God, or that his views ever terminate upon evil: and herein we coincide with the eſoteric ſcheme. But by reaſon of the ſcantineſs of our plan, we commonly apprehend his views to terminate where our own do, therefore aſcribe whatever we can diſcern to be good, either in the poſſeſſion or the conſequences, to his providence; and for all elſe we do not want ſources to aſſign it: for there are the imperfections of nature, the rovings of chance, the follies and misbehaviour of mankind, to account for phyſical evil; and the perverſeneſs of freewill, to account for moral.

17. Nevertheleſs all nature and all the powers of nature being ſubject to the divine power, it

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is manifeſt that the evils worked by them could not have befallen againſt the divine Will, becauſe nothing has happened which that Will might not have prevented, therefore we ſay they were permitted. And this is enough to give them progreſs, for there being Agents and cauſes every where ready at hand to produce evil, there needs no more than permiſſion to let them take their courſe, without making proviſion for ſetting them at work. So the office of Providence remains only to work out the good, and reſtrain its contrary within due boundaries. If it be ſaid that permitting is the ſame thing as cauſing or doing; for he that ſees a villain going to aſſaſſinate a perſon whom he could eaſily ſave but will not, can never eſcape the imputation of murder: whoever urges this objection, muſt be very little acquainted with the nature of the human mind, whoſe uſes we are now ſolely to conſult. For though in our ſpeculative moods we can ſcarce find a difference between permiſſion and action, yet they appear in very different colours to the imagination.

A humane benevolent man might ſcruple to cut off a leg, to hang up a malefactor, to kill an ox or ſheep himſelf, yet may ſuffer and even employ the ſurgeon, the executioner, and the butcher to do it: and when we read of Morocco emperors putting criminals to death with their own hand, we always look upon it as the mark of a cruel, ſavage, and vindictive temper. It

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is a common ſaying that you muſt ſet a rogue to catch a rogue: but an honeſt man would diſdain ſtooping to thoſe baſe and treacherous artifices employed by the rogue he ſets to betray his accomplice. A miniſter having as much conſcientiouſneſs as ambition, might ſcruple in his own perſon to tempt the honeſt but weak and needy ſervant of a foreign prince to betray his maſter's ſecrets: yet make no difficulty to ſend his emiſſaries, for that purpoſe, when he finds it neceſſary for the intereſts and preſervation of his own country. Were he to do the former, we ſhould have a mean and odious opinion of him: were he to boggle at the latter, not only his ill wiſhers and the grumblers, but the more candid and conſiderate, would condemn him as over ſcrupulous, narrow minded, and inſufficient for his office.

Since then we find ſo ſtriking a difference with reſpect to the moral character between doing and permitting, as that we may innocently ſuffer a thing to be done which would fix a blemiſh upon us to do, it is commendable to preſerve the ſame diſtinction in our conceptions of Providence. For as we have obſerved before, the ingredients in our idea, more eſpecially our exoteric idea of God are all taken from archetypes found within ourſelves: for we cannot ſee him as he is, nor penetrate into the eſſence of his nature, therefore ought to model our apprehenſions according to our beſt notions of perfection

fection and holineſs. And I believe any common man, perhaps any man whatever, in his ordinary trains of thinking, when he has not leiſure to extend, to compare and examine his reflections on all ſides, would be more ſhocked at the thought of proviſion being purpoſely made for the ſins of men, than at their being permitted.

18. Not that the general apprehenſions of mankind were always of this caſt, for the Gentiles often heard of the deceits, the adulteries, the revenges, the murders, practiſed by their Gods, without thinking the worſe of them: and the Jews were bred up in ſuch ſtrong perſuaſions of a Theocracy, directing every good or evil that befell their nation, ſtirring up enemies againſt them, ſometimes tempting men and hardening their hearts, that they were brought by education and cuſtom to look upon theſe things as not incompatible with holineſs. And whoever will carefully examine the general tenor of the ſcriptures, will find them approach nearer upon this article to our eſoteric than to the modern vulgar doctrine. Therefore it was no improper inſtruction for them to pray, Lead us not into temptation. This our expoſitors in general now interpret, Ward off thoſe temptations that would be thrown upon us by other Agents.

Nor are there inſtances wanting elſewhere of their annexing other ideas to the text than did originally and naturally belong to it: ſo that it

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ſeems eaſier for them to juſtify, than deny the fact. For they may reſt their juſtification upon the fundamental principle even of their adverſaries, to wit, upon the nature of things: for what things are of nearer concern to us, than our own apprehenſions, the make and caſt of our imagination? or what nature more incumbent upon us to ſtudy, than our own? But cuſtom being a ſecond nature, the variations worked thereby muſt be regarded in forming a practical doctrine. It is the buſineſs of a phyſician to ſtudy nature, nor does he depart from his rule when he varies his methods according to the temperature and conſtitution of his patients; when he recommends exerciſe in a palſy or a lethargy, but reſt and compoſure in a fever; when he preſcribes copious phlebotomy to the Frenchman, but more ſparingly to the Spaniard or the Engliſh. In like manner a Phyſician of ſouls follows nature by inſtilling ſentiments adapted to times and circumſtances, and explaining thoſe which were ſalutary only to the antient Jew or Gentile, in ſuch manner as may bring them ſuitable to modern digeſtion.

For my part I muſt confeſs I could never prefer that petition in the ſtrict literal ſenſe with any devotion, therefore am forced to take the comment for my private uſe. Nor is it in matters of Religion alone that I find it impracticable to make apprehenſion keep pace with knowledge: for in my common ſcenes of buſineſs or diver-

diverſion, I cannot conceive the ſtedfaſt ground I ſtand upon, to ruſh forward inceſſantly nine hundred miles in a minute; nor the wainſcot ſhelves ſupporting my heavy folios, to contain above forty times more of empty pore than ſolid ſubſtance; nor the yielding air to preſs upon my fleſh with many tons weight without my feeling it; nor the compacteſt bodies I ſee or handle, to be made of little particles ſmaller than the fineſt duſt raiſed by a chariot wheel, holden together without any ſtrings or cement between, by external preſſure of ether: all which are certain truths demonſtrated to us in the ſchools. Thus the modern expoſition ſtands founded upon reaſon and the nature of things, nor can it juſtly be charged as a prevarication and departure from authority; for we are told that our inſtructor preached to the poor, that is, the vulgar of his own times: therefore it is no profane or improbable preſumption to ſuppoſe, that had he been to come in our days and preach to the poor now living, he would have altered his form from Lead, into Protect us againſt temptations, or perhaps Permit them not to fall upon us.

19. But our ideas of goodneſs and holineſs will not allow us to think any thing permitted through overſight, nor unleſs with a view of ſome gracious purpoſe beyond: for it is no uncommon thing for Providence to bring forth good out of evil, and when we can diſcern this, it

it gives us a fuller diſplay of the divine wiſdom and fatherly care than we ſhould otherwiſe have had. As for troubles and misfortunes, we often find reaſon to be thankful for their having fallen upon us: a painful diſeaſe or dangerous accident has brought many a heedleſs creature to ſerioufneſs and conſideration: and the foundations of prudence are generally laid in diſappointment, for it is this that puts us upon exerting our ſagacity and induſtry in taking better meaſures for the future. Even our pleaſures ſpring in great meaſure from evil, for they conſiſt chiefly in action and employment, and moſt of the buſineſs of life lies in providing for the wants and neceſſities of nature, or ſecuring ourſelves againſt inconveniencies that have proved irkſome to us: ſo that if there were no danger of miſchief that might hurt or incommode us, our time would paſs inſipid for want of ſomething to do.

The pleaſures of indolence and indulgence of our humours, however delightful at firſt, are not of a nature to laſt long: therefore thoſe who place their dependance upon them quickly find them end in diſguſt and loathing, if they have not ſomething from time to time to ruffle the calm, and give a quickneſs to their languid deſires; a novelty to objects they had been ſatiated with. And for ſuch as have long ſchemes of diſtant advantage in purſuit, they could not furniſh out the full career, if it were

not for the rubs and difficulties intervening in the way. Nor do labour and uneaſineſs want efficacy to create pleaſure, by making the very deliverance from them an enjoyment: ſickneſs renders health more delightful; croſſes and ſquabbles give a double reliſh to peace and quiet, and he that ſhould never know a trouble could ſcarce be ſaid to know the value of eaſe. For we judge of things by compariſon, and never feel the happineſs of our condition ſo ſenſibly as when reflecting upon a worſe, eſpecially one that we have experienced ourſelves.

The miſchiefs we run ourſelves into by folly and ignorance give birth to our philoſophy: for who would take pains to hunt after deeper knowledge, if the ſuperficial notices of common ſenſe were ſufficient to ſecure him againſt every danger he apprehended: our common topics of thankſgiving are either the deliverance from trouble we have laboured under ourſelves, or misfortunes we have ſeen fall upon others; our ſublimeſt virtues of benevolence and piety ſpring from our vexations and diſlikes: while in youth, health, and plenty, men can find the ſources of gratification within their own fund, ſo are apt to think of themſelves alone and their own pleaſures without regard to other people, or to the giver of all their bleſſings; but when diſtreſſes fall upon them from which they cannot extricate themſelves, they can then ſee the need of [illegible] and underſtand the expedience of mutual

mutual good will and good offices; and when all human help fails, they then begin to think of ſeeking it elſewhere. It is a common obſervation, that uninterrupted proſperity makes men forgetful of God and their future ſtate; the troubles, the dangers, and ſhortneſs of continuance in this world, are what puts them upon looking towards another: for he that is ſecure and ſatisfied in his preſent condition has little inducement to endeavour attaining a better; nor perhaps are there any who wiſh to be in heaven until they can ſtay no longer here, or until reduced to a ſituation wherein they can find no pleaſure in life.

20. Neither is moral evil incapable of being made to yield excellent fruits: the foulneſs and fatal conſequences of one man's wickedneſs may ſerve as a warning to thouſands to beware of the ſteps leading into the like, and his indulgence of a vicious appetite ſometimes prove the means of eradicating it. For while there are reſtrictions keeping vice within bounds, it cannot do its worſt: but when permitted to take its full ſwing, it hurries into miſchiefs that make its pernicious quality palpably manifeſt, and work a reformation. So that it may be ſaid of ſome, they would not be ſo good as they are, if they had been reſtrained from being ſo bad as they were.

Beſides that vices curb and correct one another; for being extremes, their contrary attrac-

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tions ſerve as a balance to keep them from deviating, too far out of the middle way. The covetous and extravagant would be more ſo but for each others company: pride and vanity rouze up lazineſs, and are themſelves reſtrained by the trouble there is in ſupporting them. Ambition ſupplies the place of public ſpirit: emulation that of honour, reſentment or inſenſibility ſtand in the room of courage; and a ſervile compliance with faſhions performs the office of decency and good nature. How many induſtrious poor find employment in ſatisfying the needleſs wants of the rich? How much of the public revenues ariſe from the follies and luxuries of mankind? And how much of the public ſervices is performed by an immoderate thirſt of gain or applauſe, or by an averſeneſs to labour and an irregularity of conduct, driving men into perilous profeſſions?

All which things demonſtrate the wiſdom of Providence, that can produce order out of confuſion, the fruits of a moſt conſummate prudence out of ſelf-intereſt, thoughtleſſneſs and inordinate paſſions. For when we reflect how many thouſands there are who would cut any man's throat for half a crown, how many of the ſcum of our people have been employed in protecting us againſt foreign enemies, how much power is ſometimes veſted in the hands of perſons who care for nothing but themſelves: it ſeems a miracle that there ſhould be any ſuch

thing as law, or government, or property in the world; much more that we ſhould live in that peace and plenty, and ſecurity which we enjoy.

Nor are inſtances wanting, both in ſacred and profane hiſtory, of ſignal benefits made to grow out of an evil root: the hardneſs of Pharaoh gave room for the divine power and glory to diſplay themſelves: the malice of the Jews and treachery of Judas were inſtrumental to the redemption: the tyranny and greedineſs of an Engliſh monarch, together with the ſcandalous lives of the prieſthood, brought about our deliverance from the greater tyranny and corruption of Popery: the unreaſonable lengths of Cromwell's party inſtructed our forefathers at the revolution, how to frame the conſtitution upon a ſolid and equitable footing: the extravagancies of methodiſm and licentiouſneſs of free-thinking help to purify Religion from the droſs of oppoſite kinds, by putting our learned men upon ſtudying the uſe of human underſtanding without abuſing it, and guard againſt the two ſpecious but dangerous errors of being righteous overmuch, and wiſe overmuch; or perhaps preventing themſelves from advancing haſtily things that would not ſtand the ſcrutiny, or laying greater ſtreſs upon orthodoxy and externals than upon a rational and uſeful tenor of conduct.

Neither can we well imagine virtue itſelf to ſubſiſt without ſome deviations from it; for if we

we were never permitted to do wrong, we could not chooſe but to do right; and where there is no choice, there is no merit, or commendation, or reward. Were temptations never to aſſault us, we need take no thought of our conduct; and were they not ſometimes to overcome us, we ſhould have no incitement to diligence and watchfulneſs, nor to fortify ourſelves with thoſe good purpoſes and habits that conduct to our happineſs: for it is the frequent ſtruggling with an adverſary and being ſometimes foiled by him, that whets our ſagacity, exerciſes our ſtrength, and adds ſturdineſs to our reſolution.

21. Therefore ſince offences muſt needs come, becauſe they give being and vigour to virtue, becauſe they terminate in miſchiefs that ſerve as a neceſſary example and warning to keep the world in order, becauſe they are made inſtrumental to gracious purpoſes which would have been fruſtrated without them: we cannot find any thing to diſturb us in the thought of their being permitted. Nay if we conſider the matter fairly, we muſt acknowledge the permiſſion of them an act of mercy and kindneſs: for if the evils they produce be neceſſary, they muſt have fallen heavier by being brought on, any other way. Had diſeaſes conſequent upon debauchery and lewdneſs been made inevitable, they would have given us a more unfavourable idea of Providence, than being placed in every man's power by care and ſobriety to

avoid them: or had they been enjoined as a command; how hardly ſhould we have thought of our Governor as of a moſt ſevere and cruel taſkmaſter.

But permiſſion being given for vicious inclinations to captivate the Will and darken the underſtanding, the drunkard quaffs his liquor in jollity and merriment, without thought of the indigeſtions, the gout, the joint-racking rheums that will enſue: and when the phyſician has ſet him up in tolerable order again, he ſings Hang ſorrow, caſt away care, and returns to his old way with full enjoyment; for he has no foreboding of the conſequences, nor ſees the deſtruction lurking at the bottom of the bowl. So the battered rake, if nature or medicine can reſtore him to a little ability, ſquanders it all away again without reluctance, until he has exhauſted all his health and fixed incurable rottenneſs in all his bones. It is true they both pay dearly for their pleaſures; but then they enjoy them while they can, without being embittered with any dread or anxiety at what may happen afterwards; and when their excruciating pains come upon them, they feel no more than the preſent ſmart, without doubling it by the regret of having done that which brought it upon them.

Whereas if the miſeries they endure be neceſſary for ſome ſervices to mankind in general, they muſt fall ſomewhere; but were they aſſigned to the ſober provident man looking always

ways forward upon the preſent moment, who ſhould be obliged to take the meaſures knowingly for bringing them upon himſelf, how much ſorer would they preſs upon him without any mixture even of a tranſient pleaſure? With what reluctance would he ſwallow the poiſonous draught? How grievouſly would he nauſeate the repetition of what he had ſuffered by ſeverely? with what horror would he enter upon other debaucheries that lead to certain wretchedneſs and torment? And when the fatal conſequences came on, how would he be apt to double their preſſure by fretting and repining at ſo hard a ſervice being impoſed upon him? Have we not then reaſon to be thankful that thoſe are permitted to make themſelves examples of ſuffering whoſe vicious inclinations prompt them to undertake it willingly, rather than have it forced upon ourſelves, to whom it would prove a diſmal ſcene in the proſpect, an intolerable burden in the endurance.

22. Thus we may ſometimes ſee how good ſprings out of evil, and though we cannot ſee it in moſt caſes, yet we may ſafely conclude from the character of our heavenly Father, that not a ſingle misfortune or misbehaviour is permitted which does not produce ſome greater good although to us unknown. But our ignorance of the benefit need not invalidate our concluſion, for we may be ſenſible the chart of our imagination is defective and ſcanty: and

as a man tracing a river in his map, does not ſuppoſe it to have neither ſource nor diſcharge, becauſe he ſees none within the tract exhibited; ſo we when contemplating the courſes of events, may conceive there are higher cauſes and lower ends than thoſe lying within our proſpect. Nevertheleſs we can hardly extend our thoughts further than the intereſts of mankind, therefore ſuppoſe the evils abounding upon earth tend by ſome ſecret way or other to the good order and happineſs of this world, or to exerciſe and prepare men for a better.

As for the ſufferings of the next life we know the dread of them is neceſſary to reſtrain enormities that could not be diſcovered nor puniſhed here: yet upon the doctrine of the ſtrait gate, the benefit redounding to the few righteous paſſing through it can ſcarce be imagined a good at all adequate to compenſate for the extremities of torment, whereinto multitudes are hurried by the broad way; neither need we ſuppoſe them inflicted in deteſtation and reſentment. For though the wicked have lived in enmity againſt God, yet he who has ſhewn us, as well by the Sunſhine of his Goſpel, as by his candle of reaſon, that we ought to love our enemies, and forgive injuries, unleſs where it is neceſſary for our own ſecurity or the public good to animadvert upon them, cannot fail of loving even his enemies, and being willing to extend his mercy to the greateſt of ſinners, were not their puniſh-

puniſhment neceſſary. But external neceſſity of compulſion there can be none upon him, nor can we deny that if there were none other way, if he were not able to raiſe up children unto Abraham of the moſt obdurate ſtones, yet he might relieve them by annihilation: therefore that he does forbear this relief, muſt be owing to their ſuffering being a neceſſary ground whereout to work ſome far greater good. But the good can be none to himſelf, for he reaps no advantage from whatever befalls his creatures: whence follows, that it muſt redound ſomewhere, though we cannot tell how nor where, among them; and the univerſe upon the whole contain much greater happineſs for this worſt of evils, and the wicked courſes leading thereinto being permitted, than if they had been prevented.

Yet though we may thus upon occaſion extend our imagination a little beyond its ordinary limits with reſpect to conſequences, we cannot do the like with reſpect to cauſes: for they lie ſo complicated in intricate lengths, that we cannot well trace them farther than the depravity of free will, which we muſt aſſign for the ſource of all the wickedneſs prevailing or that would prevail, if Providence did not continually watch over its motions, and determine which of them it were proper to permit, and which to reſtrain.

23. Having thus laid out the ſcene of our imagination in the manner moſt ſuitable to its

dimenſions, we can find no room to ſuſpect God the author of ſin: for bare permiſſion no more makes him ſuch, than a magiſtrate licenſing a Book to be printed makes him author of the compoſition, or charges him with all the falſities and abſurdities that may be contained in it. Neither can we ſay we are tempted of God, but that we are drawn aſide and tempted by our own luſts: for they being always ready to lead us aſtray, he has no occaſion to tempt us into the evils neceſſary for bringing forth his gracious purpoſes, becauſe we ſhall produce enow of ourſelves, and his work remains only to reſtrain us from thoſe that would have been ſuperfluous. Nor yet can we pretend that his permiſſion authorized us in the wickedneſs we have committed: for had we forborn, there would not have wanted other ſinners to have compleated the requiſite meaſure of iniquity; ſo that what we have done was done needleſsly, and not under his authority. No more can we deem him the approver of our evil deeds, for were he ſo, he would give them full ſcope, even where there were no good to be produced out of them: but we ſee he has diſcouraged them by the miſchiefs and puniſhments conſequent upon them, by the moral ſenſes and faculty of reaſon he has given us; therefore we muſt look upon them as odious and deteſtable in his ſight, notwithſtanding his permitting them ſometimes. As a man may ſuffer a practice he deteſts, where the preventing

it would be attended with worſe inconveniencies; or ſwallow a medicine he nauſeates for the re-eſtabliſhment of his health, or give it to his children for the like ſalutary purpoſe.

Hence it appears that he has eſtabliſhed an eſſential difference in actions, ſome being made naturally productive of enjoyment, others of ſuffering: and if he permits ſome of the latter to take place, it is not that he has altered their nature, but becauſe he purpoſes to work out a greater good from the miſchiefs they engender. As when a man undertakes ſome very laborious taſk, it is not that he ſees any thing to like in the fatigue, but for the ſake of greater advantage he expects to work out thereby. Nor does this contradict what was ſaid before, that when the Lord looked upon all the lines in his plan of Providence, behold they were very good: for as dark and rugged and deformed objects may become beautiful in compoſition, by ſetting off the brighter figures of a picture, ſo what is evil and miſchievous may become good in a plan, where the more perfect parts muſt fall to pieces without it.

24. Nothing we do can in the leaſt either encreaſe or diminiſh the happineſs of God, either give him joy or vexation, no not for a moment: therefore in philoſophical ſtrictneſs there is nothing either pleaſing or diſpleaſing to him: but we take our ideas from our tranſactions among one another. Men are induced to do kindneſs by

by pleaſing them, and the contrary upon being diſpleaſed; therefore according to the return we receive at their hands, we judge them pleaſed or diſpleaſed with what we have done: and this judgement we have ſo frequent occaſion to paſs that it becomes habitual, and we cannot disjoin the idea of pleaſure in the Agent from the acts of kindneſs ordinarily conſequent thereupon. Hence we fall unavoidably into the ſame apprehenſions with reſpect to God, of whom we can neither think nor ſpeak, otherwiſe than as being pleaſed or diſpleaſed with actions according to the manner of his treating them. Since then we know that ſome kinds of behaviour are of a nature to engage his bountiful favour towards us, others to draw down his vengeance upon us, we may juſtly ſtile the former pleaſing and agreeable, the latter diſpleaſing and odious in his ſight, becauſe the like follow from either, as would have been brought upon us by a man in whoſe power we were, upon being pleaſed or diſpleaſed. To attempt to ſcrutinize how God himſelf ſtands affected, would be an idle and uſeleſs as well as preſumptuous ſpeculation; for his treatment of us being the only thing that concerns us to know, ought to denominate the quality of our actions: and on this reſpect we ſhall find an eſſential difference between them, ſome having a natural tendency directly oppoſite to that of others.

God

God has implanted the deſire of happineſs or enjoyment in our natures to be the conſtant ſpring of our action: appetite firſt directs to the means of enjoyment, and this is our proper guide ſo long as we have none other to follow. When reaſon opens, it diſcovers the errors of appetite, and points to a diſtant good lying beyond that of preſent gratification; this then we are to follow as moſt beneficial to our intereſts: yet appetite ſtill deſerves our regard in ſuch of her calls as reaſon declares innocent, for preſent gratification is a benefit whenever not attended with future inconvenience. But our reaſon proves dark, narrow, and defective; therefore it behoves us to avail ourſelves of the united reaſon and experience of other perſons among whom we converſe, or of thoſe that have gone before us: ſo the rules they have formed are our further direction in matters whereof we cannot fully judge of the expedience, and our habitual attachment as well to rules we have ſtricken out ourſelves, as to thoſe received from good authority, generate the moral ſenſes.

Of rules ſome are calculated upon obſervation of the things about us relative to the uſes, accommodations, and enjoyments of life: theſe we ſtile prudential. Others are drawn from the idea of Providence or general government of affairs throughout the world: and theſe point out to us what is pleaſing and diſpleaſing to God, that is, what things he has appointed in his diſpoſition

poſition of cauſes to bring good or evil upon us, though we do not clearly underſtand in what manner or by what media, they produce them. From theſe laſt ariſe our higheſt moral ſenſe or ſpirit of Religion, whoſe notices, where it is pure and genuine, deſerve our ſtricteſt attention and fulleſt obedience, as being our ſureſt indication and evidence of a conduct moſt beneficial to ourſelves: and this natural tendency of theſe rules, though perhaps not particularly diſcernible by us, is the real foundation whereon they ſtand. Nor is the caſe different if there be any given extraordinarily, by other means than human reaſon or obſervation, for God wants nothing of us, ſo can enjoin us nothing but for our benefit: therefore his commands may at the ſame time be conſidered as advices of one who perfectly knows the nature of all his works, their mutual relations or dependencies, and what diſpoſitions of mind or courſes of behaviour will lead to our greateſt advantage.

Thus we ſee the aim whereto all our guidances conduct us, whether rule or reaſon, or appetite, is none other than our good, and we have no cauſe to eſteem any thing good unleſs recommended as ſuch by one of thoſe ways: ſo that it would be abſurd and unnatural to do what we have cauſe to believe will end in our damage, although God be able to work out ſome unknown advantage therefrom; nor have we any warrant

warrant or excuſe for doing evil that good may come of it.

25. But to prevent miſtakes, it is neceſſary we ſhould underſtand what is meant by doing evil that good may come of it: for in ſome ſenſes of evil, it is not only allowable, but obligatory upon us to do it for the good to redound therefrom. For every thing irkſome or diſguſtful to the ſenſes is an evil conſidered apart in itſelf, and ſo any man will judge it: for if he were forced upon ſome ſlaviſh drudgery, or had a nauſeous potion poured down his throat, he would eſteem it an injury and damage done to him. Therefore whenever we enter upon a toilſome work, or take a doſe of phyſic, it is doing evil that good may come of it: ſo is every act of ſelf-denial we practiſe. Nay the very eſſence of Prudence conſiſts in nothing elſe, for appetite prompts us faſt enough to our immediate good, ſo the office of Prudence and duty is none other, than to reſtrain us from this good in proſpect of a greater advantage lying beyond.

Nor are there inſtances wanting even of moral evil being deemed juſtifiable, ſuch as procuring intelligence of an enemy's counſels by bribery, encouraging deſertions, enticing away the workmen of perſons abroad, having invented a new manufacture, publiſhing rewards for rogues to betray one another. Some righteous people are for conniving at brothels, becauſe, ſay they, it

ſaves

ſaves many an innocent creature from deſtruction: for the vicious will take their courſe ſomewhere, and if you do not allow them the commerce of women as vicious as themſelves, they will uſe all their art and induſtry to ſeduce the virtuous, or elſe perhaps turn to a more deteſtable ſpecies of lewdneſs. It has been laid down as a rule that you muſt breed up your children to have a little pride of themſelves, becauſe this will preſerve them from mean company, who would corrupt their morals. And a man may ſometimes find it prudent to ſtir up a leſs dangerous paſſion in himſelf, to aſſiſt in overcoming others more pernicious, which he cannot maſter by the force of reaſon and reſolution.

In all theſe caſes men do, or at leaſt encourage the doing evil, that good may come of it, but then the good to reſult therefrom is ſuppoſed to be known, and the evil neceſſary for the attainment of it: upon which ſuppoſition the evil cannot be called ſuch in common propriety of ſpeech, which eſtimates actions, according to the whole amount of the conſequences taken into contemplation. Therefore by evil is naturally underſtood whatever our judgement, or rules, or moral ſenſes warn us againſt as productive of more miſchief than advantage upon the whole ſequel of its effects: and this evil it would be highly imprudent and fooliſh to do in expectation that providence will work out a greater unknown good therefrom. For what

is

is this but giving a reaſon for running contrary to reaſon, and laying it down as a rule to act in oppoſition to all rules? than which nothing can be more prepoſterous, or inconſiſtent with itſelf.

Nor can we pretend a zeal for the glory of God as being manifeſted in our wickedneſs: for it is more manifeſt in our good deeds, which he giveth us both to will and to do. We have cauſe to glorify his wiſdom for the good uſes to which he turns the follies and ſins of men: but we have the like cauſe to glorify it, and much greater to glorify his goodneſs, for the powers and opportunities enabling, the diſpoſitions inclining, them to do well; and the ſucceſſes, ſometimes wonderful ſucceſſes, wherewith he bleſſes their endeavours in the great advancement of their own happineſs thereby, or that of their fellow-creatures. The permiſſion of evil, both natural and moral, is ſo far from being in itſelf a topic of praiſe, that it has conſtantly proved a ſtumbling block, which we could never get over, if there were not ſuch innumerable inſtances of proviſion made for preventing and eſcaping it, as fully evidence the infinite goodneſs and perfect holineſs of our ſupreme Governor: and it is from this part of his character we conclude, there is no evil permitted unleſs neceſſary to accompliſh ſome gracious and holy purpoſe. Since then Providence, although ſometimes bringing good out of evil, brings it forth more frequently from good; we have a better chance

of

of giving occaſion for the divine glory to manifeſt itſelf in that unknown benefit which may be worked out from our actions, by doing good than evil.

26. But it is ſaid, offences muſt needs come. What then? do we know when there is need, or what particular neceſſity there is for any one of them to come? What though the madneſs of the times in the grand rebellion has laid the foundation of our liberty: does this juſtify the parties poſſeſſed with it; who could not poſſibly foreſee this happy event, nor had any thing further in view than gratifying their ambition and indulging their angry humours? or is this a reaſon why we ſhould wiſh to follow their ſteps, from which we can ſee nothing but miſery and confuſion likely to enſue? Perhaps our conſtitution may not yet be compleatly perfect, and Providence may have ſome ſecret good purpoſe in view by permitting thoſe torrents of ſlander and calumny that pour weekly upon our places of public reſort. But there is no good diſcernible by us likely to come of it: for this epidemical diſtemper of ſwallowing all kinds of ſlander with greedineſs, muſt render us all in our turns contemptible and odious to one another, which will naturally diſable us from acting vigorouſly againſt a foreign enemy. For ſtrength conſiſts in unanimity, but what hearty concurrence can there be among people who deteſt and deſpiſe one another?

Therefore

Therefore it becomes every good patriot to diſcourage this humour of reviling and vilifying: if we differ in opinion, let us treat one another like reaſonable creatures, not like a pack of ſnarling dogs; and ſupport our own ſentiments by calm argumentation, not endeavour to run down all oppoſers by joining in with the cry of every yelping cur that opens only becauſe he is hungry, or becauſe he has none other way to make himſelf taken notice of; ſo upon all other occaſions we are to conſult our rules and our reaſon: for they are the proper criteria to diſtinguiſh what is needful to be done, or to be omitted. Rectitude of Will conſiſts in a ſteady adherence to the dictates of underſtanding, nor can we conceive it otherwiſe in God himſelf: but his intelligence extends to all nature and all futurity, therefore it is no wonder he ſees a rectitude and holineſs in meaſures, where we find the contrary.

Whence it follows that we ſhall imitate him not by doing the ſame things that he has permitted, but by following the ſame guidance, to wit, the line of our intelligence; for ſo does he too follow his intelligence, only his is boundleſs, whereas ours ſtands confined within the narrow compaſs of reaſon and information, that he has vouchſafed us. Within this compaſs then we are to look for his declared Will, which alone we are to obey; for all elſe belongs to the ſecret Will, which can be no rule to us becauſe founded upon knowledge it is impoſſible for us to

fathom: and to attempt to meddle in matters he has reſerved to his own diſpoſal, would be the moſt conſummate impudence, and daring preſumption.

For God alone, who diſcerns the remoteſt iſſues of things, can know what evils are capable of being turned to good purpoſes, and how to ſet bounds to iniquity that it overflow not too far: therefore the permiſſion of evil is a branch of the divine prerogative, not to be encroached upon without ſacrilege. Such encroachment is like touching the ark of God with unhallowed hands, from which nothing could be expected but certain deſtruction. For what can be more arrogant and impious, than doing wickedly to find employment for providence? It is the ſame as ſaying to God, I will do all the miſchief I can: now do thou produce good out of it. This ſeems to exceed the rebellion of Lucifer, for he ſought only to make himſelf independent on the Almighty: whereas the ſinner tranſgreſſing upon this pretence would make God his Servant, by ſetting him at pleaſure to clean away his dirty work, or turn it into ſweetneſs and ſalubrity.

27. Nor perhaps would men ever find temptation to do evil that good may come of it, if they were apprized what kind of good may be expected therefrom; for it is not their own good, but that of other creatures. They flatter themſelves with a notion that becauſe God has per-

permitted their evil, he muſt be pleaſed with it, and will reward them accordingly; whereas we have ſhewn, he may permit a thing he is diſpleaſed with, and conſequently the perpetrator can look for nothing elſe than to feel the effects of his diſpleaſure: but he permits the ſin, becauſe he foreſees the miſchiefs conſequent upon it will work out ſome ſignal advantages to his creatures. Would men conſider the matter in this light, which is the true one, they would not be ſo fond of running themſelves into miſery for the ſake of ſome unknown profit to redound therefrom to others.

They do not act ſo in their temporal concerns, though there are the ſame grounds for running counter to common Prudence as duty: for we truſt that all the diſeaſes and diſtreſſes of life have their ſecret uſes, or elſe they would not be permitted, for our gracious Governor is able to deliver us from them all, and would do it but for that reaſon. Yet who ever purpoſely ruins his health, or throws away his fortune, becauſe Providence will not ſuffer theſe misfortunes to befall needleſsly, nor without producing a greater benefit to mankind therefrom? How much more abſurd then would it be, to incur miſeries to whoſe intenſeneſs and duration we can ſet no bounds, becauſe there are reaſons to be given that they would not be inflicted, unleſs neceſſary to ſecure the happineſs of other Beings, and becauſe the univerſe upon the whole is better

with them than without them? Such ſervice is not required at our hands: Moſes was rebuked for deſiring that the wrath of God might be turned upon himſelf from the Iſraelites; and certain the offer was made inconſiderately, for ſuch romantic zeal for the public good is not in human nature, nor was any man ever really actuatedby it, whatever he might perſuade himſelf.

Nothing is more deceitful than the heart of man, or more difficult for him to diſcover than his own true ſprings of action: there are many latent motives which prompt us without our perceiving them, many plauſible colourings that claim to be the ſources of motions we had before determined upon. Nor can an obſervant byſtander fail of ſeeing that when men do wrong, there is always ſome private paſſion, or intereſt, or ill humour, or perverſeneſs of temper leading them thereto which they are unwilling to acknowledge, and then, if they have been plunged deep in enthuſiaſtic notions, they raiſe this idle pretence to an extravagant ſanctity in ſinning for the divine glory, to caſt a glare for blinding their own conſcience, or more commonly to cover their contempt of the divine authority from the world. Thus while they would ſeem to be labouring after an unknown remote good, beyond all reach of human ſagacity or foreſight to find out, they are in reality purſuing preſent gratification in diſregard of a good that their judgement,

their moral ſenſe, or their conſcience might make manifeſt; in which indulgence of the cravings of appetite, or inordinate deſire, the very eſſence of depravity and unholineſs conſiſts.

28. I have been the more prolix and particular upon this Article, becauſe having ſpoken of a univerſal Providence extending to all events whether fortunate or diſaſtrous, and appointing or permitting all the actions of men whether good or evil, occaſion might be taken from hence to imagine them all equally pleaſing to God, and alike the proper objects of our endeavours: which being a moſt dangerous and fatal error, ſubverſive of Religion, morality, and even common prudence, it ſeemed more excuſable to be redundant, than wanting in the cares taken to obviate it. But this poiſonous fruit is not now very common, as growing from an injudicious intenſeneſs of thought upon the manner of the divine government; a root but little abounding at this ſeaſon. For eaſineſs and indolence of temper ſeems the prevailing humour; mens thoughts being commonly taken up with the amuſement of the day, or of the hour, unleſs perhaps when ambition, or covetouſneſs, or ſome other darling paſſion engages them a little further. A few tranſient ideas of a general Providence content them, without troubling themſelves to examine particularly by what channels the adminiſtration of it is carried on; whereby they luckily eſcape the danger of ſcrutinizing

further than their lights would enable them to do it ſafely.

As far as appears among our cotemporaries they never ſin upon principle, nor with any more diſtant view than indulgence of the paſſion that happens to come uppermoſt, unleſs there be ſome who ſeriouſly hold the methodiſtical doctrine, That a man muſt be in a ſtate of damnation before he can enter a ſtate of ſalvation; from which naturally follows, that he ſhould make himſelf damnably wicked as faſt as he can, that he may have the quicker paſſage into righteouſneſs. But theſe gentry, having an utter deteſtation of all human reaſonings, are not likely to meddle with my ſpeculations: ſo that what is offered above will be ſuperfluous to the generality, who may therefore ſkim it lightly over, as they do moſt other things put into their hands, except it be a lampoon, or a piece of ſcandal.

But as there are perſons who beſtow more thoughts than common upon the courſes of events throughout the world, it was my buſineſs to provide for what difficulties I could imagine might ariſe in their minds; more eſpecially to guard on all ſides againſt whatever ill conſequences might be drawn from things I had advanced myſelf. Therefore if there be any to whom the poſitions maintained in the Chapters of Providence and Free-will, or in ſeveral other places ſhall prove a ſtumbling-block, as ſeeming to make

make God the author of ſin, and to encourage immorality by repreſenting it alike productive of good with the ſtricteſt virtue, the endeavours here uſed for removing that imputation are intended for their ſervice; whereto it is hoped they may prove effectually conducive, provided ſo much more than the faſhionable attention be given them, as might be expected from perſons who may have any doubt ariſing upon a point of the utmoſt importance.

29. But as the imaginations of men are formed upon very different ſcales, not all equally capacious, thoſe conceptions which are exoteric and wholeſome to ſome, will ſtill remain eſoteric and dangerous to others. But it is of no avail to our Maker what we think of him or of his works, nor does he require any thing of us either in thought or deed, unleſs for our own good: therefore we ſerve him beſt when we think of both in the manner beſt adapted to our own reſpective uſes. Such as have the fulleſt idea of the divine Government and fatherly tenderneſs, may look upon an event happening as a certain evidence of its being the Will of God; and beſt that it ſhould happen: therefore not only the misfortunes and troubles befalling in the World, the wicked deeds perpetrated by others, but even the follies they have committed themſelves, may be matter of no diſcontent to them; being perſuaded that all theſe things will turn out to ſome greater advantage, or elſe they would not have

been ſuffered. Yet though they are not ſorry at what has happened, they may be ſorry that it ſhould have been neceſſary to happen; which ſentiment will urge them ſufficiently to avoid the like whenever they do not ſee that neceſſity, that is in every thing future lying within their power: for the evidence alledged of evils being beſt, belongs only to thoſe already paſt and done, which manifeſts the ſecret Will in thoſe inſtances.

So that notwithſtanding their reſignation under the faults they have been permitted to do, they will ſtrive againſt them for the future, as earneſtly as they could without ſuch acquieſcence, and be ready to join heartily in that petition, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. By which muſt be meant the apparent Will: for the ſecret is already done throughout every region of the univerſe on earth, as compleatly as it is in heaven. Nor is there any thing in the nature of this contented temper, rightly conſidered, to abate our vigilance over our future conduct. What if a man upon having a ſtone fall upon his head, ſhould believe it happened for the beſt? nobody would think this a reaſon why he ſhould put himſelf in the way of another ſtone, or forbear to take the proper caution for preventing the like accident again. So although upon having offended once he ſhould ſuppoſe it happened for the beſt becauſe permitted, yet if he judges ſoundly, he can draw

no

no reaſon in the world from thence why he ſhould offend a ſecond time, or ſhould not take warning from his firſt failure, to guard againſt the temptations that led him thereinto.

30. But I fear ſuch ſoundneſs of judgement is not common, nor perhaps poſſible to be fully attained: therefore an eaſineſs under the reflection of paſt miſconduct cannot be generally recommended with ſafety. For our deſires naturally flow from our likings: according as things have affected us formerly we are apt to deſire and endeavour the repetition of them, and uneaſineſs at what we have done is the ſtrongeſt ſpring to drive us into a contrary conduct. So it will be beſt to cultivate a vexation at the evil committed by ourſelves, and an abhorrence againſt it elſewhere: provided we can disjoin the offender from the offence, ſo as to love the one while we deteſt the other. This we do eaſily in our own caſe, for we do not hate and deteſt ourſelves how much ſoever convinced of having groſsly misbehaved, from whence we may learn to do it in the caſe of our neighbour.

The Romiſh doctors reckon three ſtages in the paſſage from vice to virtue: Attrition, Contrition, and Repentance. The firſt is a ſorrow for the miſchiefs men have brought upon their own heads by their ill doings; the ſecond a ſorrow for the doings themſelves, and the laſt a thorough change of mind or hearty diſpoſition to practiſe them no more. There may be ſome perhaps

perhaps ſo happily conſtituted as to find the two former needleſs, being able to begin directly with the laſt. It is not difficult in the common affairs of life, where there is no ſtrong paſſion or habit in the way: a man upon finding ſome practice he has followed a little inconvenient to his health, or his fortune, may take warning from thence to leave it off without a violent regret at what he has done. But to attain a perfect unconcernedneſs at every thing paſt, yet without being a whit the leſs careful of his meaſures for the future, is more plauſible in theory, than feaſible in practice.

On the other hand there are perſons of ſo little ſenſibility that, though they ſmart ſeverely for their follies, the moment the ſmart is over they think no more of it than if nothing had ever happened amiſs. With theſe people it is neceſſary to begin at the firſt ſtage: for till you can bring them to carry their reflection a little beyond the preſent feeling, you will never work upon them at all.

But for the moſt part contrition is the proper entrance into the way of amendment, and the more hearty the ſorrow, the more effectually and ſpeedily it will forward us on the way. Nor is the deteſtation of vice of little avail to help us in our progreſs, for what we have been uſed to look upon with odium, will be more apt to grieve us when falling upon ourſelves; therefore cenſure when properly applied is ſerviceable, not only

only as a ſpecies of puniſhment for the wicked, but as a preſervative for the good. But though the averſion ought to terminate in the practice without extending to the practiſer, when the ſeparation is poſſible, yet I fear it is not every body that can make it. For the vulgar, little uſed to diſtinguiſh further than their ſenſes or their paſſions can guide them, judge of things in the lump: if they like the perſon, every thing he does muſt be right; if once perſuaded of any thing wrong in him, he muſt be capable of all that is bad.

I ſuppoſe it is upon this principle that our party leaders have encouraged the ridiculing and aſperſing one another's characters, even upon topics no ways relative to the matters in conteſt: for the mob, being no judges of thoſe matters cannot eſtimate the man by his meaſures, but the meaſures by the man; therefore the fixing an ill impreſſion of the one, is thought the moſt effectual method of giving them a diſtaſte for the other. Whether this method be juſtifiable, or not carried to greater lengths than neceſſary, I leave to others to determine; as likewiſe whether the juſtifiableneſs of it be conſidered at all, or only the gratification of reſentment, ill humour, or ſelfiſh deſires. But with regard to heinous enormities, eſpecially ſuch as may prove contagious, one muſt not be too rigorous with perſons of groſs apprehenſion, in requiring them to diſtinguiſh between the vice and the vicious: becauſe

becauſe if you will not allow them to deteſt the offender, they will be apt to think lightly of the offence, whereby they may fall into great hazard of being infected by it.

This may account for thoſe cruel ſeverities the Iſraelites were taught to exerciſe upon their corrupt and idolatrous neighbours, for they ſeem to have had little rational or refined in their religion, but were altogether guided by appearances and ſenſitive ideas: and with ſuch there is no medium, they muſt either love, or hate to extravagance.

Therefore if they had been allowed to intermingle among idolaters, or even to treat them with common humanity, they would have taken a liking to their follies; and there was no way of ſecuring them againſt the contagion, unleſs by raiſing an utter averſion to the perſons infected, and a perſuaſion that no uſage could be too bad for them to receive. But even the populace of our times are not quite ſo groſs and ſtony; they can deteſt a vile profligate enough to make them abhor his practices, without wiſhing to knock out his brains: ſo they may be reſtrained from giving ſuch terrible proofs of their righteouſneſs, without endangering the loſs of it.

Yet the ideas to be infuſed into them muſt be accommodated to the ſize and ſhape of the veſſel; for it is in vain to think of making men perfect at once, or inſpiring them with better ſentiments

timents than they are capable of bearing: a miſtake your very righteous people often fall upon, to the diſappointment of their own purpoſe, and great detriment of thoſe they take in hand. But as the husbandman ſtudies the nature of his ſoils as well as of his ſeeds, ſo whoever would ſow the ſeeds of virtue, muſt obſerve diligently the characters and apprehenſions of the recipients ſtriving to improve them in thoſe particulars where an improvement may be made: for the ſame ſtep may be an advance in one man which would be going backward in another. Therefore diſcretion muſt be uſed, and no eaſy matter it will prove, to diſcern what is an approach towards holineſs in each perſon, according to his ſituation, keeping it always in aim to bring him by practicable gradations to a univerſal benevolence even to the worſt of men, ſo as to ſhew them all the kindneſs that may not prove an encouragement to vice, or endanger miſchief to himſelf: in imitation of that power who cauſeth his ſun to ſhine upon the good and upon the evil, and ſendeth his rain upon the juſt and the unjuſt; and we truſt will turn every evil permitted, to anſwer ſome good and holy purpoſe.

31. Having now explained my notions of the eſoteric and exoteric doctrines in the cleareſt and fulleſt manner I was able, I hope they will appear upon a careful and candid examination to be the ſame in ſubſtance varying only in language

guage (Permiſſion being uſed inſtead of Proviſion, or as I may ſay, the latter being tranſlated by the former;) and in the method of laying out our objects according to the ſcene beheld in our imagination. When withdrawn from the hurry of ſenſible objects we give the full ſtretch to contemplation, we may then ſurvey the divine oeconomy from beginning to end, and though our views will ſtill be very ſhort and imperfect with reſpect to particulars, yet we may clearly diſcern ſo much as to ſee, that all events muſt be determined by their proper adequate cauſes, theſe again by others prior from whence they were generated, and ſo on without interruption until we find their ſource in the immediate acts of the Almighty: whoſe omniſcience will not ſuffer us to imagine he performs any without knowing, or without thinking what they will produce in the remoteſt or minuteſt conſequences. Whence follows the abſolute dominion of Providence; nothing ever happening that was not noticed and marked down in the original plan. We may then turn round to the other ſide of the proſpects and perceive that events do not terminate in what we diſcern or feel of them, but draw on further conſequences depending upon one another in an endleſs ſucceſſion: by which we may underſtand how every line in the plan of Providence, however appearing otherwiſe in ſome particular links of the chain, may be drawn in wiſdom and goodneſs for promoting

ing the advantage of the creatures. Upon this view it will appear that God is righteous in all his works, gracious and holy in all his doings, the very proviſions made for phyſical and moral evil being calculated for encreaſing the ſum of happineſs and holineſs throughout the univerſe.

From this idea of univerſal Providence we may learn to conduct ourſelves within our own little province: for ſuch we have in the adminiſtration of affairs, by means of the power and free-will allotted us. Nor does the divine dominion deſtroy our freedom; for freedom has no concern with antecedent cauſes, nor the proviſions giving them birth, but ſolely with the force or reſtraint there might be upon our future volitions and actions; and experience convinces us that we have a certain ſcope to range in, exempt from ſuch force or reſtraint. Within this compaſs then it behoves us, if I may be pardoned the expreſſion, to lay our plan of Providence in imitation of the moſt perfect model: drawing our lines, ſo far as our beſt judgement can extend them, with a view to produce the greateſt good, upon their whole length, to our fellow-creatures, or ourſelves, that can be effected upon every particular occaſion. And becauſe we are liable to inordinate paſſions too ſtrong for judgement to overpower, it is incumbent upon us to endeavour after a holineſs of temper, exempt from malice or envy, or ſenſuality, or ſelfiſhneſs, or indolence, which might draw us aſide from the execution of our plan.

But

But as a traveller, while paſſing along the road, muſt obſerve the tracks before him and keep his eye attentive to the objects near at hand, nor can ſtand to gaze at the diſtant horizon: ſo we, when occupied in the common buſineſs of life, cannot retain the whole extent of our contemplative ſcenes in mind. We then find our proſpect reduced to ſcantier limits, the chains of cauſes appear broken ſhort, nature, chance, and free will, ſeem original ſources of events; and though there may ſtill remain a general idea of Providence, we cannot trace it up to its firſt appointments, but it preſents to our view a ſuperintending power, continually guiding the motions of ſecond cauſes by freſh and occaſional operations, though when or how the touch is given we cannot perceive. In this partial ſcene of things we have other ſources to aſſign for all the evils that happen, ſo it becomes us to aſcribe the good alone to Providence, together with the purpoſe of producing further good out of the evils permitted. Yet permiſſion is no ſanction, not encouragement, but wickedneſs ſtill remains the object of vengeance and diſpleaſure to God, who has nothing unholy in his nature: therefore we cannot make ourſelves more agreeable to him than by labouring, ſo far as our imperfections will allow, to imitate his holineſs.

32. Thus we ſee the two ſyſtems, though proceeding by different routs, conduct to one and the ſame end, namely, to give us the pureſt idea of our Governor, and moſt heavenly diſpo-

diſpoſition of mind we are capable of attaining. But if we go to blend them together, it will utterly ſpoil our work; which then can anſwer no end at all, unleſs to involve us in doubt and perplexity. It will be like joining the halves of two maps caſt upon different ſcales, from whence nothing but incoherence and abſurdity can enſue: there will be rivers pointing their courſe againſt mountains, private gardens bigger than the adjacent county, and ſtreets of cities leading into the ſea. It may be preſumed that all the difficulties, ſtarted againſt the ways of Providence, ariſe from this motley mixture of groſs and refined notions; for there are people too ſhrewd to rank among the vulgar, yet too dull ever to become adepts: theſe operators are perpetually mingling the ſtrokes of one ſyſtem among the other, whereby they make neither uniform, but mangle them both, and in this condition it is no wonder they appear diſtorted and disfigured.

For if we behold the vulgar ſcheme with the glaſs of contemplation, we ſhall find it abounding in inconſiſtencies; effects without a cauſe; free will acting upon no inducement; all things guided by wiſdom, yet for the moſt part depending upon contingencies; the power of God irreſiſtible, yet many things done contrary to his Will; nothing hidden from his ſight, yet innumerable trifling and filthy objects unbecoming his regard; Providence ever watchful over events yet permitting thoſe to take effect, which were not intended, nor approved. Theſe the plain

man does not perceive, for he takes his ideas ſingly, ſo diſcerns not the diſcordance that would be found upon comparing them together: or if a difficulty occurs, he can acquieſce without expecting to ſolve it, being ſenſible of his ignorance, and ſatisfied that many things may be true, though to him appearing unaccountable.

On the other hand if we inveſtigate the chain of cauſes to the fountain head, without turning the oppoſite way to conſider what conſequences may enſue beyond our immediate notice, we ſhall ſtill retain our vulgar idea of terminating all events in the uſes of man; and then our reference of them to the divine appointment will have a miſchievous effect, repreſenting many proviſions therein as trifling, unkind, and unholy.

Nevertheleſs every ſcience muſt have a beginning, nor can one expect to riſe from the popular ſyſtem, at a leap: in the interim of our progreſs there will ariſe doubts and difficulties, for theſe are ordinarily the avenues to knowledge. Yet they will not diſcompoſe us ſo long as we bear in mind, that we are but learners, for this reflection will ſatisfy, that we are not fully maſters of any point that may ſeem to caſt an imputation upon Providence. For when we conſider, that unholineſs, by the eſſence of it, muſt proceed from ſome paſſion, or ſelfiſhneſs, or intemperance of mind, we ſhall lay it down as a fundamental principle, that nothing of this ſort can have place in the moſt perfect; and ſhall

eſteem

eſteem it the neareſt approach towards perfection, to cultivate the oppoſite character in ourſelves.

33. But then let us not ſuffer the deſire of holineſs to carry us beyond the bounds of diſcretion, nor miſlead us in judging wherein its eſſence conſiſts: an error that men of no ſmall credit among the multitude have fallen into. For they obſerving juſtly that ſtudy, meditation, prayer, thankſgiving, and the externals of Religion, are the main ſupports of holineſs, place the whole of it in them; ſo would have men think of nothing elſe, but employ every day and every hour of the day in a continual round of theſe exerciſes. Whereas holineſs does not conſiſt in them, but in the diſpoſition of mind to be contracted by them, which diſpoſition is better forwarded by the life and ſpirit of our devotions, than by the length or frequency of them.

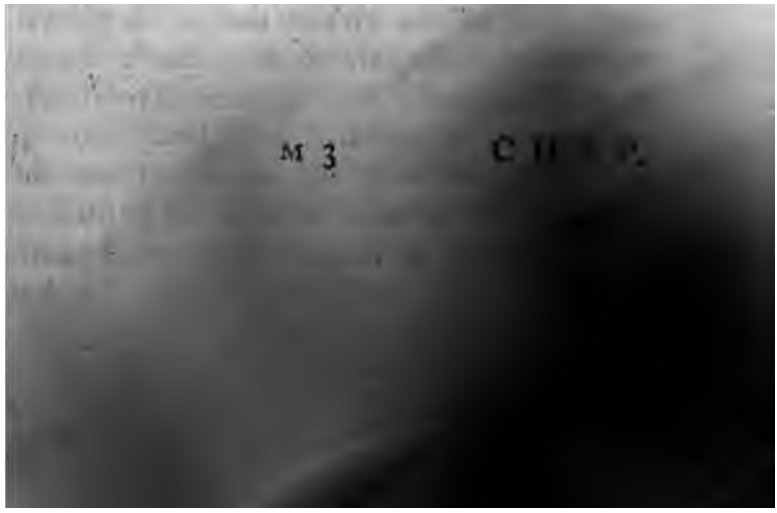
For it is not in human nature to keep up a glow of fervency further than to a certain period, according to the ſtrength and preſent condition of our organs: all beyond is perfunctory and unavailing form, no more a nouriſhment to the mind than eating beyond one's appetite is a nouriſhment to the body. Beſides that the practice of a rational and uſeful life is equally, if not more, neceſſary to ſtrengthen our ſentiments: for obedience is better than ſacrifice, and infixes the principle, whereon it was performed, deeper than any mental efforts can do. Nor

would it be more abſurd for a ſoldier to deſert his poſt that he may lie lurking about his General's tent, leſt he ſhould love his reverence by loſing ſight of him, than for us to neglect our active duties, that we may attend more cloſely to thoſe of devotion.

It is not by ſuch exerciſes alone that we can imitate the moſt perfect models: God himſelf not only receives the adorations of Angels and Men, but likewiſe feeds the young ravens and cloaths the lillies of the field. We have offered reaſons to make it probable, that the bleſſed ſpirits above do not ſpend their whole time in empty Hallelujahs, but are continually employed on high beheſts to aſſiſt in adminiſtring the courſes of nature, and fortune. And God has placed us under a neceſſity of attending to ſenſible objects for the ſupport and convenience of ourſelves, and our fellow-creatures. Let us then in all our meaſures have a reſpect to their uſe and practiſe religious exerciſes, ſo far as they tend to give us a happy turn of mind, dependant on Providence, contented with its diſpenſations, and pleaſed with being under its protection: and make us induſtrious within our narrow ſphere of action to maintain the order, and promote the happineſs of the world wherewith we ſtand connected.

Perfection is not to be attained without attending carefully to all branches of the duty allotted us: but he that aims only at one point commonly

monly overſhoots his mark; nor is it unuſual for men to become unholy, through an intemperate zeal of being holy. It gives them narrow notions of the ſupreme Being, as receiving actual delight from their ſervices, and uneaſily anxious to have them paid; it keeps them inexpert in their buſineſs, and uſeleſs in their ſtations, makes them moroſe and rancorous againſt thoſe whom they ſuppoſe the enemies of heaven, fills them with ſpiritual pride and contempt of mankind; puts them out of humour with the world about them, with the condition of their own nature; and overwhelms them with deſpondencies at their not attaining impracticable lengths. So that there is ſuch a thing as being too pious, where the piety is not rational and genuine, and the greater lengths it runs, ſo much the worſe: as a man, whoſe money is in counterfeit coin, the more he has of it, will only find it the greater toil and burden.



CHAP. VI.

Things Providential.

TO what purpoſe, it may be aſked, do
make theſe the ſubject of a particular e
quiry: or what can be expected from the ti
of this chapter, more than we have alrea
deſcanted upon in our Chapter on Providenc
we have there ſhewn that all things derive th
eſſence, and all events their accompliſhme
from that ſource: that ſmall as well as gr
the vrieſt trifles equally with the moſt mom
tous concerns, were comprized within the c
ginal plan. The groveling earth-worm,
worthleſs ſea-weed, the dirt we trample up
were works of the ſame hand that made
human ſoul with all her powers of intelliger
with all her ſtores of ſcience and accompli
ment. The crawling of emmets and falling
leaves were contained in the ſame ſcheme whe
were projected the riſe of empires, and the e
period of their continuance. A ſparrow
more falls to the ground than a kingdo
overthrown, a bubble no more burſts tha
world is diſſolved: not an atom ſtirs throu
out the material univerſe, nor a fancy ſtarts
in the imagination of any animal, without
knowledge and attention, without the permi
or appointment of our almighty and all-pr

dent Governor. Even the wild rovings of chance took their riſe from certain cauſes, and circumſtances occaſioning them to proceed in that manner; which flowed ſucceſſively from prior cauſes, through channels whoſe ſources were firſt opened by omnipotence, with full intelligence of whatever was done, and clear foreſight of all the minuteſt conſequences that ſhould reſult therefrom.

From whence it may be inferred the epithet Providential was ſuperfluous, all things being ſuch without exception, nor is there any room for a diſtinction between events that are providential, and others that are not. But notwithſtanding the univerſal dependence of events upon certain cauſes provided in wiſdom for bringing them reſpectively forth, it does not follow that the epithet providential, applied to diſtinguiſh ſome of them from the reſt, muſt be an inſignificant term. For we have ſeen before, that derivatives do not always carry the whole extent of their primitives: every thing done for one-ſelf is not a ſelfiſh act, nor is a man, a whit the more ſelfiſh for taking an honeſt and prudent care of his own concerns. In like manner neither is every thing denominated Providential, that proceeds from the hand of Providence, but ſuch works only wherein there are marks of that hand diſcernible by human underſtanding. Thus it appears the epithet we have now taken under conſideration, is a term belonging to the exoteric

language; having no force in deſcribing the real nature of things, but the appearance of them in our narrow comprehenſions.

To diſcern the ſyſtem of Providence compleatly, we ought to know the preciſe quantity of good the creatures are capable of receiving, and quantity of evil neceſſary to ſupport that good; what elſe beſides good, but conſiſtent with it may be contained in the general deſign; the various ſtates of perceptive Beings, according to their ſituation with reſpect to one another or to matter; the ſeveral compoſitions and organizations of material ſubſtance, together with the ſecondary qualities and eſſences reſulting therefrom; their poſitions, and that of their component parts; the motions both external and internal among them; their mutual operations, and extent of their influence upon one another; the effects as well immediate as remote of their action, and tendency of it through ſucceſſive channels to accompliſh the purpoſe intended. But this we may ſee at firſt glance is an immenſe ocean of ſcience unnavigable by human ſagacity: ſhould we attempt to compaſs it, we ſhould find ourſelves bewildered in the multitude of objects, and intricacy of cauſes depending upon one another, in a line further than our eye could ſtretch to; and by endeavouring to graſp the whole ſcheme of Providence, ſhould quite loſe our idea of it, and ſee nothing but inextricable confuſion.

2. There-

2. Therefore it behoves us to ſelect ſuch parts of the ſcene before us, as we can draw upon the ſcanty ſcale of our imagination, ſo as to diſcern the objects clearly, and trace out their mutual dependencies. Nor need we fear doing an injury to the glory of God by this partial conſideration of his works: for that advances it beſt, which manifeſts it moſt fully to us. He wants not glory from us for his own benefit or amuſement, but becauſe a ſtrong and well grounded apprehenſion of his Providence would fill us with ſatisfaction of mind, at being conſtantly under a gracious protection, that will guard us from every evil unproductive of greater advantage: and is the main baſis both of prudence and benevolence, by enſuring to us, that whatever we do well, ſhall be attended with ſucceſs either in preſent or in futurity, and making the good of our fellow-creatures to be our own intereſt.

But it has been ſeen in the foregoing Chapters that, as our organs of imagination are conſtituted, it would be miſchievous to refer every thing to the divine appointment. An intelligence extending to all minuteſt events together with their remoteſt conſequences, is an idea much too large for our comprehenſion: no man can conceive the poſſibility of it, how well ſoever his reaſon may convince him of the fact. And there are ſome trivial and unſightly objects, which to join in the ſame thought with our ſupreme Gover-

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nor, would give us unworthy notions of him, and leſſen our ſenſe of his purity, his Majeſty, and his Holineſs. This being the caſe, it is allowable and commendable, becauſe neceſſary and expedient, for us to confine our ideas to ſecond cauſes, where we cannot trace them ſatisfactorily to the firſt.

Some effects we ſee by experience proceed regularly from the primary properties of bodies, or their ſecondary qualities reſulting from texture and organization; others follow upon their application to one another, without our knowing what brought them together: others again are the product of voluntary action. Theſe three then, Nature, Chance, and Freewill, we are juſtified in regarding upon common occaſions as original ſprings of events, becauſe for the moſt part we want largeneſs of view to diſcern their dependence upon higher ſources. They are all the cauſes giving birth to the phenomena falling under our obſervation: but among them we find viſible footſteps of a choice, and contrivance, that requires another cauſe to account for it. For nature operates neceſſarily; chance works at random without preference of one thing above another, and though voluntary Agents proceed upon an idea of ſomething they are about to do, yet we ſee them ſometimes acting with a wiſdom not their own, towards the accompliſhment of a deſign they had not in their thoughts.

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Whatever therefore bears the marks of a wiſdom not belonging to the known cauſes producing it, we may properly ſtile Providential; which term being applied to things, not in reſpect of their real eſſence, but of their appearance in our eyes, muſt of courſe be relative to particular perſons; that being providential to one man which is not ſo to another, according to their reſpective underſtanding and lights. Nevertheleſs there are ſome things appearing obviouſly ſo to every eye that will caſt an attentive look upon them, and are rather unheeded than unſeen by the generality of mankind. Theſe lucid ſpots of our proſpect, wherein the Image of Wiſdom and Providence ſtands reflected, we ſhall take for the ſubject for our preſent enquiry.

3. And it is by this reflected Image that the very being of a God is moſt commonly manifeſted. We have attempted other proofs of his exiſtence in the laſt volume drawn from the locality, the numbers, the different properties, of all ſubſtances falling under our notice, which could not exiſt in that manner neceſſarily or of themſelves, and therefore require a Firſt cauſe to aſſign their ſeveral ſtations, eſſences, and qualities. But this kind of argumentation is of too abſtracted a nature to ſerve for common uſe, as requiring a particular preparation, and ſtretch of the faculties to purſue it without loſing the track. Moſt men, and perhaps all men upon

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moſt occaſions, content themſelves with the three cauſes mentioned in the preceding ſection, without looking forward for any further ſources from whence their powers of operation were derived. But when they behold them working with an art, and contrivance that is not in their nature, when they ſee neceſſity, caſualty, and ignorance, bringing excellent ſchemes to perfection: this at once convinces them of a ſuperior intelligence, which requires no nice inveſtigation of cauſes to diſcover. For when Agents void of Wiſdom act wiſely, it is plain there muſt be ſome hand to conduct them; though we may not be able to perceive by what ſprings or channels of communication it operates.

So that here wants no long train of reaſoning to lead us into the knowledge of a Providence. Penetration and cloſeneſs of thought have no further uſe in this caſe than to diſcover the fallacy of thoſe ſophiſms wherewith perſons of a perverſe ſubtilty of refinement have overclouded the moſt apparent truths. The plain man needs no aſſiſtance here from the ſpeculatiſt, but may ſay to him as Diogenes did to Alexander, Only pleaſe to ſtand out of my Sun-ſhine. Let him but obſerve the phenomena before him, and he may leave them to work their own effect upon his imagination: it is his part to take care they do not paſs without his Notice, for while remaining unheeded, they can work no effect at all; and if not fixed in the remembrance, their effect will be

be but tranſitory, and unprofitable. If he has not been uſed to look upon theſe objects, he will do well to begin with thoſe he finds moſt ſtriking, and apt to raiſe an admiration in his mind: for admiration is an affection or gentler kind of paſſion, and the force of paſſion is neceſſary to rouze up an habitual immenſibility; as phyſicians cure a palſy by raiſing a fever.

Extraordinary phenomena, and effects requiring the concurrence of many cauſes to produce them, affect us moſt ſtrongly; nor can admiration keep up her glow without freſh fuel to be ſupplied by new objects occurring, or at leaſt ſuch as are new to our obſervance; for when once grown familiar they loſe their efficacy upon us. When the Moon interpoſes between us and the Sun ſo as to cover his whole Body, it ſets every eye agape, becauſe happening but once or twice in an age: but that total eclipſe of the Sun of many hours continuance, varying the employments of life, made every night by the interpoſition of our own earth, raiſes emotion in nobody; for this very reaſon, becauſe it happens every night. The common air we breathe gives us no thought of Providence becauſe it is ſo common, lying ready at the lips of every animal in plenty enough, and to ſpare, for the uſes of them all: but our food and loathing, being not ſo copiouſly diſperſed nor obtruded upon us every where, make us more attentive to that admirable proviſion of materials,

trials, enabling us to procure them by our care and induſtry.

Yet though it be expedient to vary our objects of contemplation, it is not ſo to croud them too thick: for then they will have no better effect, than if they had not been varied at all. When one reads Derham's phyſico-theology, the mind is tired with the multiplicity of proofs, which rather overwhelm and benumb the faculty of admiration, than excite it: a ſhort general deſcription of the human mechaniſm, with a few of the moſt curious parts would perhaps have anſwered the purpoſe more effectually, than that elaborate treatiſe. For it is not enough to conſider the juſtneſs and weight of our evidence, without conſulting likewiſe the capacity and preſent diſpoſition of the mind, that is to receive it: for the moſt wholeſome aliments crammed immediately will bring on a heavineſs inſtead of enlivening, and the moſt palatable will nauſeate when the appetite is not ſet towards them. It is a vulgar ſaying, that one man may lead a Horſe to water, but twenty men cannot make him drink: therefore we ſhall ſucceed beſt by watching favourable ſeaſons, ſuch as after an eſcape from ſome imminent danger, when the mind is moſt ſuſceptible of impreſſion, and applying the objects we find moſt ſuitable to our temper, as ſtriking moſt forcibly upon us.

It is a too common miſtake, among perſons of a pious turn, to take their opinion of things providen-

providential from their teachers: the reality of a Providence they may reaſonably take upon the credit of others of larger underſtanding, and undoubted integrity, though it is better if they can be brought to ſee it themſelves, and for that purpoſe they are exhorted to obſerve things paſſing providentially around them. But Providential, as has been obſerved already, does not imply what derives from the hand of Providence, but what carries an evidence of that original, inviſible marks upon it: now nothing can be evidence to him who does not diſcern the force of it with his own eyes. Therefore when things are propounded as providential, let a man examine impartially and courageouſly whether he feels them operate as ſuch upon his imagination: if he does not, they are not providential to him.

To pretend ourſelves convinced of the divine government upon reaſons that do not appear valid in our judgement, is a mockery of God and a deception of ourſelves: for they will never ſtrengthen our ſenſe of his dominion, the only good fruit expected from them. Our duty is not to make reaſons but to ſearch for them, and inculcate ſuch as we find moſt cogent upon our memory. Nevertheleſs though every man muſt weigh his evidence himſelf, another may point out the ſources from whence it is to be fetched, and prepare it for the ſcale: to which ſervice we ſhall now endeavour to lend our helping

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hand by ſome few obſervations that may tend to promote it. For we do not mean to enumerate the evidences of a ſuperintending guidance: this would take up more of our time and labour, than we can ſpare from other matters, and has already been done ſufficiently, as well by divines as philoſophers: we only purpoſe to make ſome more general obſervations without regarding whether they be new, or have been made by others before.

4. All effects lying within the reach of our notice were the produce of nature, chance, or free will: which three therefore are the fields we have to ſurvey. But works performed by the contrivance and induſtry of man afford us no marks of a ſuperior intelligence, his own power and ſagacity being ſufficient for their production: yet if we conſider his powers of action, the talents of his underſtanding, the materials he has to work with, none of which he made for himſelf, we muſt refer them to the gift of nature: if the circumſtances concurring to furniſh him with opportunities and motives for acting, the purpoſes whereto he co-operates, different or even contrary to thoſe he had in view, we muſt acknowledge chance to have a great ſhare in his proceedings. Wherefore voluntary agency, ſo far as we have concern with it at preſent, becomes abſorbed into the other two, leaving nature and chance alone for the ſubject of our examination.

Intelligence is manifeſted two ways, either by means ſupplied to anſwer the end we may conceive to have been had in view, though we do not diſcern the methods by which they were prepared; or elſe by the contrivance apparent in productions, though we do not ſee what end they anſwer: the former more particularly gives us the diſplay of Providence, the latter of the wiſdom wherewith it is adminiſtered. But where we can diſcern both the art and the uſes it ſerves, the evidence is double, and if well attended to muſt ſtrike with double force upon the mind. Our own pleaſure and profit being ever uppermoſt in our thoughts, whatever contributes to the general convenience and accommodation of human life, wherein we may have a ſhare, is moſt apt to draw our attention: therefore the good and well being of mankind is the end we can moſt readily conceive to have been had in view, and the means conducing thereto will be eaſieſt received as evidence of a provident care and concern in ſupplying them.

As to the brute creation, it is cuſtomary to deſpiſe them as below the divine regard, yet if there be a man ſo ſingularly open hearted as to deem them too, and ſuch enjoyments as they are capable of, worth a thought of that power who can think of every thing without neglecting any thing, he will have a larger field of Providence before him, and find evidences, wanting to other people. Nevertheleſs if we will not allow

them to deſerve concern for their own ſakes, ſtill ſince many of them are ſubſervient and neceſſary to our uſes, we may look upon the proviſions made for their preſervation as a remoter means promoting our favourite end. And with reſpect to inſects, and other animals ſeeming wholly uſeleſs, we may diſcern a contrivance in the methods provided for their breeding and ſuſtenance, though we ſhould not be ſenſible of any good purpoſe anſwered thereby.

5. If we ſaw a houſe ſtored with furniture, utenſils, and victuals, the gardens planted with herbs and fruit-trees, the grounds ſtocked with cows, horſes, poultry, and deer, all in a manner fitted for the entertainment and convenience of a family; we ſhould certainly conclude there was ſome maſter, who had taken care to provide theſe ſupplies for the uſes whereto they were reſpectively proper. Or if an ignorant perſon went into a room where among ſcales, weights, compaſſes, meaſures, and other things of common uſe, he ſhould find quadrants, parallel rules, theodolites, and armillary ſpheres, of which he had no notion what they were good for, nor could underſtand the figures upon them: yet he might know without telling, that theſe were the works of ſome artificer proceeding with ſkill and contrivance, who made them for purpoſes well worth the care he had beſtowed upon them.

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In this manner we conſtantly reaſon upon common occaſions, and there wants only the proper attention to lead us into the like train of thinking upon the phenomena of viſible nature. For there we may perceive ample proviſion made in vaſt variety for the numerous family of Adam. Corn, fruits, pulſe, herbs, cattle and fowl for our ſuſtenance; wool and flax for our cloathing; drugs and ſimples for our relief; air for our breathing; timber, ſtone-lime, and brick-earth for our habitation; wood and coal for our firing; beaſts of burden for our aſſiſtance; winds to purify our atmoſphere, to refreſh our heats, and waft us from ſhore to ſhore; variety of ſoils and climates to bear us a produce of every kind; dews and rains to make them yield us their encreaſe. The ſea, that original ſource of water ſo neceſſary to us for many uſes, ſerves likewiſe to aſſociate diſtant nations by opening the communication of commerce. The Sun diffuſes his warmth and light to cheriſh us: the Moon helps to leſſen our darkneſs, and the tides ſhe raiſes aſſiſt our navigation. The diſtant ſtars guide us over the boundleſs ocean, and inhoſpitable deſert, extend the fields of ſcience to an immenſity of ſpace, and turn the rugged brow of night into a cheerful ſcene of contemplation.

Even within the narrow compaſs of our own bodies, we carry about no inconſiderable ſtores, without which we could not receive benefit

ſrom thoſe without us. We have engines of digeſtion and ſecretion, ſprings and channels of circulation, limbs for inſtruments of action, bones for our ſupport and protection, organs of ſpeech for our mutual intercourſe. We have appetites to ſtimulate, ſenſes to inform, the faculties of remembering, comparing, diſtinguiſhing, judging, to enlighten, and reaſon to direct us. Neither do we want ſources of enjoyment and pleaſure, either in the capacity of our ſenſes and affections of joy, hope, admiration, and innocent mirth to receive them, or the plentiful ſupply of external objects fitted to give them.

And among thoſe of nature's productions wherein we do not find our immediate account, we may yet ſee a variety and regularity of diſpoſition that muſt be the effect of deſign and conſummate ſkill to conduct it. The four elements though formed out of the ſame matter, yet have ſeverally ſo ſtable a conſtitution, that they can mingle perpetually without changing into one another; and by their different commixtures produce other ſecondary elements, as ſalts fixed and volatile, acids, alkalies, ſpirits of different kinds; which being mingled together in ſuitable proportions generate all the groſſer bodies we ſee and handle. By this wonderful join-work the ſtores of nature are ſupplied in an endleſs multiplicity of ſpecies, having their ſeveral eſſences diſtinguiſhing them apart, hard or ſoft; compact or looſe, dry or humid, elaſtic, flexible,

flexible, unyielding, glutinous, fluid or coherent.

The earth contains within her bowels abundance of ſoils, ſtones, foſſils, minerals, metals, ductile, malleable, fuſible, brittle or liquid, and diſpoſes the parts of her diamonds and her chryſtals with ſuch an amazing artifice, as that though ſome of the compacteſt ſubſtances, yet they afford an eaſy paſſage for the light to traverſe through them in all directions. The air ſuſtains vapours of oppoſite qualities, aqueous, nitrous, and inflammable; ſome to fall in dews and rains, ſome to bind up the hail, the ſnow and hoar froſt, and ſome to dart in lightnings and meteors. Water ſerves for the baſis of many liquors, varying according to the channels through which it paſſes, whether the ſtrata of earth, or little veſſels of fruits and plants, or ſecretory ducts of animals. Fire performs the two-fold office of giving heat and light: by the former it operates diverſly in baking, melting, conſolidating, diſſipating, or evaporating; in the latter it appears under ſeven principal forms beſides the multitudes of colours made of them by compoſition, and it ſeems to be the principle giving activity to hot ſeeds, and drugs, and ſpirituous liquors.

Then if we turn our eyes upon the vegetable tribes, we may ſee them, in countleſs multitudes of trees, ſhrubs, weeds, moſſes, funguſes, cover the ground or produced in the water: each

growing, ſpreading and flouriſhing by peculiar laws adapted to its own kind, and all worked in ſuch exactneſs and nicety of art, as the greateſt human ingenuity could not imitate: their ſap veſſels curiouſly bound up together within the ſtem, or diſperſed among the roots and branches, their leaves wrought much finer than needlework, their flowers of many different makes, hues, and odours, their ſeed diverſly produced, lodged, and conſtituted, and their ſeveral parts having different taſtes or qualities dependent upon their internal texture.

Yet are theſe wonders of the vegetative world ſurpaſſed by thoſe of the animal, whoſe frame contains a more complicated machinery capable of more admirable play: for beſides the engines of growth and nutriment analagous in both, the latter are furniſhed with organs of ſenſation, and inſtruments of activity, enabling them to remove from place to place, and make their uſes of things lying within their reach. Nor do they leſs diſplay a richneſs of invention in the variety of their forms among birds, beaſts, fiſhes and inſects, fitted for flying, or walking, or creeping, or clinging, or mining, or ſwimming, covered with feathers, or wool, or hair, or ſhells, or ſcales, armed with horns, or tuſks, or claws, or ſtings: ſome living in communities ſociable as man, others working with a ſagacity unknown to him, others again without either

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ſtrength, or cunning, ſubſiſting meerly by their multitudes.

Nor can we help remarking thoſe ſurprizing inſtincts that ſeverally guide them to their harbours, their foods, their ways of breeding, and preſervation, inſtruct them to build their neſts, to make their combs, to ſpin their webs, and provide for the future, without knowledge of their wants. And when we reflect that many animals can find their commodious habitation only in one particular kind of plant, which they do not fail to find ready for them at their proper ſeaſon, as if the vegetable kingdom were in league to ſupport the animal, we ſhall be perſuaded that both were comprehended within the ſame deſign, ſuiting the qualities of the one to the occaſions of the other.

6. Thus far we have conſidered things in ſeparate lights, as uſeful to human life, or as artificial in their production, or ſtructure: if we proceed to contemplate ſuch as may ſtand in both lights, wherein the uſe and the contrivance are equally obvious, we ſhall ſtill find an ample field to range in. For we may obſerve by what an admirable train of preparations the vegetable kind perfects plenty of materials for our occaſions: corn and pulſe and fruits for our ſuſtenance, flax and cotton for our cloathing, roots and leaves and woods for our manufactures and entertainment, oils, liquors, gums and drugs for

our uſes and amuſements, even reeds and ruſhes for ſome little purpoſes we can turn them to.

How many animals are wonderfully formed and furniſhed in various ways, for ſupplying our wants and gratifying our deſires! Cattle, fowl, and fiſh for our nouriſhment, the viper, the ſnail, the cantharides for our health, the horſe and the ox endued with ſtrength and docility for our ſervices: their parts and even excreſcencies adapted to our uſes, as well as thoſe of the creatures that bore them; oil, tallow, glue, cochineal, ivory, horn, hair, wool, the nice texture of quils and feathers, the curious net-work of hides, capable of being rendered durable to preſerve our records againſt the injuries of time, or ſoftened into a covering for our tender fleſh, or worked almoſt as cloſe and compact as wood: their inſtincts ſeverally diſpoſing them to contribute towards our benefit and pleaſure. The fearleſs maſtiff guards our houſes; the faithful ſheep-dog aſſiſts in tending our flocks; the ſagacious hound and buſy ſpaniel ſupply what we want by the dulneſs of our ſenſes; the watchful cat, the digging rook, and the inſidious ſpider, help to clear us from vermin; the ſolitary ſilk-worm impriſons herſelf in her cell to lay the groundwork of our manufactures; the little fly ſits boring the oak-leaf to brew ink for our correſpondence; the indefatigable bee labours with inimitable art to furniſh wax and honey for our entertainment; the winged choiriſters gladden

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our hearts with their muſic, delight our eyes with their variegated plumage, pleaſe our curioſity with the nice architecture of their neſts, and ſkilful vigilance in tending their young, and multiply the joys of ſpring.

Then what a world of wonders neceſſary for our uſes does this microcoſm, the human body, contain! what multitude of veſſels, glands, and ducts to concoct, and diſtribute our aliment! what artificial ſtructure and excellent diſpoſition of muſcles and joints to ſerve for inſtruments of action! what amazing nicety in the organs of ſenſe! the eye with her humours and tunicles mathematically placed and proportioned among one another; the ear in winding mazes modulating the vibrations of air into ſounds; the nerves in imperceptible threads running every where through the fleſhy parts, yet returning their notices without impediment from the furtheſt extremities of our limbs. And all this complicated machinery containing an infinitude of multiform works, bound up in one little compaſs, yet with ſuch ſtupendous ſkill as that they do not interfere with one another's operations, nor fall into diſorder upon our motions.

I do not know whether I may go on to inſtance in that part of our conſtitution enabling us to make improvement in knowledge, acquiſitions of habit, dexterity, and accompliſhment becauſe theſe are currently ſuppoſed to reſide in the mind itſelf, diſtinguiſhed from every thing material.

material. If any man can ſatisfy himſelf that a peceptive Being may contain knowledge it does not perceive, as we certainly do not, and cannot with all our induſtry, call to mind the thouſandth part of all the knowledge we poſſeſs; or have habitual ſentiments wherewith it is not continually affected, I ſhall not argue the point with him. For my part I cannot conceive, how an improvement of knowledge or alteration of character can be effected without a change of modification, or new arrangement of parts, which cannot take place in a ſimple ſpirit uncompounded of parts: therefore I muſt attribute them to a mental organization, compoſed of fine material ſubſtance, ſtriking perceptions momentarily upon the mind, in the manner of external objects.

And how exquiſitely muſt this compoſition be framed to give us that infinite and yet regular variety of play we experience! Let any man take an Engliſh dictionary, and reflect that he knows the meaning of almoſt every word in that thick volume, that they preſent him with new ideas according as they are compounded in different ſtiles, ſolemn, familiar, logical, rhetorical, poetical, and humorous: let him conſider how many tranſactions, faces, and places he can remember, how many affections and ſentiments he poſſeſſes, how many points of common knowledge he is expert in, how many ways of acting he has experience of, each whereof riſe readily to his view as the occaſion happens to introduce them,

them, or as he pleaſes to call them up for his uſe or amuſement, following the regular trains without confuſion, or interfering with one another: let him conſider what a multitude of works muſt be requiſite for theſe purpoſes, and what conſummate ſkill to range them all in proper order, within a place ſmaller perhaps than can be imagined, and he will be ready to acknowledge that our mental organization is ſtill more admirable than the ſyſtem of our groſſer machinery.

7. Between the provinces of nature and chance, there lies a tract claimed by both, or ſhared in common between them: I mean the proportions and ſituations of bodies with reſpect to one another, and the motions among them uſually called the order of nature; which ſhe preſerves by her neceſſary agency, but was firſt put into it by cauſes unknown, and accidental to us. For though the Moon be holden in her courſe by the two known laws of perſeverance in a rectilinear motion, and external attraction, yet we know no laws of nature that ſhould place her preciſely in the orbit where ſhe rolls, nor give her juſt the tangential impulſe, requiſite to retain her in it.

Within this intercommoned tract we may reckon the diſtances of the planets primary and ſecondary, from their reſpective centres, their ſolidities, magnitudes, and phaſes, their centripetal and centrifugal forces, ſo nearly balanc-

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ing as to keep them in almoſt circular paths: the excentric orbits of comets, whoſe planes croſs thoſe of the others at very large angles, ſo as never to diſturb their regularity by a too near attraction. The diurnal rotation of our globe giving us the viciſſitudes of night and day; the oblique poſition of its axis ever parallel to itſelf, that winter and ſummer, ſeed-time and harveſt may never fail: the diſpoſition of its ſurface into mountains, plains and valleys, inlands, ſeas, bays, and harbours: the diſtribution of rivers, the diverſity of ſoils for the accommodation of human life, the burning ſands, the frozen zones, the ſubterraneous exhalations whereon depend the variations of wind and weather, many times ſo neceſſary to be attended to, yet proceeding upon rules which no human ingenuity can reduce into a ſcience. The juſt admeaſurement of the elements, that water may not abound to overwhelm us, nor air fall deficient, nor earth ſwell to a greater maſs than could be duly moiſtened, nor fire paſs its proper boundaries: that univerſal element which carries on an intercourſe between all parts of the world, beaming in kindly warmth from the diſtant Sun, and travelling immeaſurable journeys from the remoteſt conſtellations. The generation of metals in ſuch ſuitable quantities as that gold and ſilver are not too plentiful to ſerve us for money, nor iron and copper too ſcarce to furniſh the artificer with inſtruments and the houſekeeper with

with utenſils. The appropriation of plants and fruits, and animals, and other commodities to particular countries; whereby commerce is rendered neceſſary, and an acquaintance introduced among the ſeveral nations upon earth.

Nor muſt we omit the uſes and qualities aſſigned to animals, wherein we can turn them moſt commodiouſly to our advantage: we have not our wool to ſeek from the dangerous lion, nor want the untameable tyger to plow our grounds; but the ox, the horſe and the ſheep, have docility and manageableneſs given them for their characteriſtic. Creatures ſaleable in the fair or market are made much more prolific than thoſe of the ſavage kind. Poultry and rabbits keep within their accuſtomed purlieus; but nobody knows where to find the coarſe grained heron, or the worthleſs cuckoo. The family of bees abide patiently in the habitation we pleaſe to aſſign them, but the libertine ant will chooſe her own ſettlement from which ſhe is hardly to be expelled; obſequiouſneſs and different kinds of ſagacity are joined in the ſeveral tribes of dogs: credulity brings the wild duck into our decoys, and the greedineſs of ſwine makes the very offal of our houſes valuable. If we conſider laſtly the reigning animal Man, who ſubſiſts by ſociety, and receives his protection, his neceſſaries and accommodations, from the united labours of many perſons diverſly qualified, we ſhall ſee how their conſtitutions and talents

talents are prudently diſtributed among them: ſo that hands are not wanted for every office of life, whether active or ſedentary, venturesome, or cautious, robuſt or delicate; how the ſexes are equally proportioned, how the natural temper of ſome perſons ſets examples of virtue to others, and even their vices are ſo counterpoized as to check and correct one another.

8. Having traverſed the confines lying under an intermingled juriſdiction, we may enter the province peculiar to chance or fortune, containing the multitude of events extraordinary, unaccountable, or produced by the concurrence of undiſcoverable cauſes: which we may diſtribute into three claſſes, as they effect the human race, or particular kingdoms, or ſingle perſons. Under the firſt we may rank thoſe lucky hits which have given riſe to arts, manufactures, and ſciences: printing and gunpowder were effects of meer curioſity, and accident: the Pergamenians were put upon making parchment by being denied the importation of paper from Egypt: Pythagoras is recorded to have learned the rudiments of muſic from a ſmith's anvil: and it is ſaid the firſt ſugar-baker was a pigeon, who flying from a houſe-top with ſome duſt of the mortar ſticking to his feet perched upon melted melaſſes, the heat drove him off again in an inſtant, but the liquor in that part where he had light, was found clarified juſt in the ſhape of his claw. But without building upon legendary tales,

tales, a little obſervation may ſhew us how a particular turn of genius and ſituation in life leads men into uſeful inventions, and favourable circumſtances concur to give them encouragement.

How many profitable diſcoveries in chemiſtry have taken birth from that whimſical notion of finding the philoſopher's ſtone? For how many ages did men know the magnetic virtues of the loadſtone, without obſerving it gave a polarity to the needle? With what obſtinacy did Columbus purſue a project appearing chimerical, till he opened a paſſage to the new world? from what ſmall beginnings have religions, and ſects in philoſophy been ſpread wide by perſons of ſingular characters appearing in critical ſeaſons? What a ſeries of uncommon circumſtances, both with reſpect of internal polity, and the condition of foreign nations, contributed to lay the foundation of the Macedonian, and Roman greatneſs, and extend it over half the globe? And in remote conſequence of theſe inventions and incidents, mankind is become better cemented and civilized, though the earth be fuller peopled, the nations of it are fewer, every country has ſome intercourſe with others, and the more barbarous gradually take a tincture from the more humane: ſo that the Turks can now depoſe without murdering, and diſcharge their miniſters by other methods than the bow-ſtring; the wild Tartars are brought into ſome degree

degree of ſubjection, and the roving Arabs kept a little in ſubordination under their better policied neighbours.

9. To the ſecond claſs we may refer the ſprings working in the riſe, the growth or the decay of kingdoms. Imbecillity of counſels, corruption of manners, or jealouſies among the great, have broken empires to pieces; and extraordinary perſons or remarkable incidents have generated new monarchies, or common wealths out of their ruins. Intrepidity, policy, wiſdom, and ſometimes enthuſiaſm, popularity, or deſperation of one man, has laid the foundation of a ſtate, or cauſed a total revolution, enſlaved or reſtored it to liberty, advanced it to riches and ſtrength, or thrown all things into confuſion; nor are precedents wanting of this confuſion inſtructing thoſe who ſuffer by it, how to ſettle things again upon a more ſolid eſtabliſhment.

Little colonies from Egypt and Aſia have grown into the flouriſhing republics of Greece: the overflowings of northern adventurers erected and cantoned their military governments, which by various ſucceſſes and changes of conſtitution have been modelled into their preſent form. Commerce has migrated from the Phenicians to the Venetians, from them to the Dutch, and now extends its influence over all the people of Europe, but ſhedding the largeſt portion upon our own country. Learning and accompliſhment have had their viciſſitudes of darkneſs and ſplendor:

ſplendor: reaſon and ſuperſtition have purſued each other over moſt quarters of the globe. Wealth, ſtrength, and proſperity have travelled three ſucceſſive ages through Spain, France and Britain, making the two former in their turns, the terror, and the laſt the protection of their weaker neighbours, with the better proſpect of continuing ſo, by how much the balance of power and preſervation of liberty are a more durable baſis of greatneſs, than purſuit of univerſal monarchy.

Nor do we want ſtriking objects of reflection in the annals of our own hiſtory; where we may ſee how the crown, the church, and the barons ſtruggling which ſhould have the tyrannizing over the people, fruſtrated each others aims: until one king by a ſtretch of law broke the nobles power, and another by over-awing the legiſlature compelled them to diſarm the hierarchy. How opportunely the ſhortneſs of Mary's, and length of Elizabeth's reign, delivered us from the greateſt domeſtic and foreign dangers. How the total neglect of true policy, the wrong-grounded piety and obſtinacy, the ſelfiſhneſs and greedy extravagance, the furious bigotry of ſucceeding counſels, opened the way to our preſent happy ſituation by the moſt unpromiſing paths.

But upon this article we muſt repeat what has been noted before, that the ſame events are providential, or not, to different perſons, accord-

ing to the opinion they entertain of their being deſireable or miſchievous: for what does not appear conducing to ſome end, apprehended good, will not eaſily be admitted as evidence of a ſuperintending care. Therefore the Papiſt ſees nothing farther than chance in the many circumſtances concurring to the reformation, nor the believer in divine hereditary right, in all that contributed to turn aſide the linear ſucceſſion; or at moſt they refer theſe things to the ſecret counſels of heaven, which muſt ever remain unfathomable by human underſtanding. But there is no occaſion to urge exceptionable evidences, ſince there is ſuch plenty, that every man may find enough in incidents that have brought on an iſſue he will acknowledge fortunate and profitable.

10. We proceed laſtly to the third claſs of events, thoſe affecting ſingle perſons. And as the diſpenſations of fortune are more commonly taken for providential, than the eſtabliſhments of nature, becauſe more remarkable, extraordinary, and leſs involving us in a long chain of prior cauſes: ſo whatever affects a man's private intereſts, touches him ſtronger than thoſe of the community, or mankind in general. For we are all of the utmoſt importance to ourſelves, and think every thing conducing to our benefit well worthy regard; concerning ourſelves little with other things, any further than as we expect to be ſharers in their conſequences. Therefore

let

let every man beſtow a little pains in reflecting on the circumſtances of his own ſituation, and the various accidents that placed him in it.

If he does not know what brought his parents together, or their parents and anceſtors, or fixed them in one particular quarter, or profeſſion, or courſe of life: yet he may be aſſured all theſe things depended upon a thouſand chances, each of which happening otherwiſe he would not have been what he is at preſent, but might have been born at another time, in another country, or of another family, or wanted thoſe conveniencies and advantages of life he now poſſeſſes. If he cannot tell what cauſes operate in forming and faſhioning the child before birth, yet there muſt have been a particular diſpoſition of them to determine his conſtitution, his talents, and his natural temperament, in the manner he finds them: for he may have learned, that half the children die before ſeven years old, that many come into the world maimed, weakly, and unhealthful, and I ſuppoſe will allow readily enough, there are multitudes whoſe mental endowments fall ſhort of his own. Let him then contemplate the hazards of infancy he has run through, the advantages of converſe and experience afforded, and favourable occurrencies befalling him in life: how many dangers he has eſcaped, how many diſappointments he has avoided, and how many follies he has com-

mitted without drawing on the conſequences naturally expectant upon them.

Theſe conſiderations would be more frequently attended to and have greater efficacy upon the minds of men, if it were not for the common humour of picking out croſs accidents to ruminate upon: though a hundred things happen right, yet one that falls out amiſs ſhall dwell upon their thoughts to the utter obliteration of all the reſt, which makes them diſcontented and murmuring. Whereas if they would proceed impartially, and collect all that has befallen in their favour, and the circumſtances ſurrounding them which it would hurt them to be deprived of, they would find them infinitely outnumbering their contraries. What though the ſeaſon be gloomy, we have ſeen many fair ſeaſons before, and there are hopes of the like returning again; nor are we deſtitute of alleviations towards ſupporting us under the preſent. In ſhort no man's condition is ſo miſerable, but he owes ſomething to fortune, for ſupplying comforts to mitigate, or helps to prevent it from growing worſe. What though we ſee things fall out better with other people, ſhall we be ſo unreaſonable as to turn their ſucceſſes into our wants, and not rather keep our eye upon that variety of chances that have contributed ſomething to our benefit?

Would men but uſe themſelves for a while to conſider from what concurrence of cauſes they

they derive their health, their ſtrength, their abilities of body and mind, their conveniencies, and enjoyments of life, and obſerve fairly and carefully the courſe of events, ſo far as affecting themſelves; they would find ſo many remarkable things among them, and diſcern ſuch marks of diſpoſition and deſign in the ordering of them, as to be perſuaded, there is a care had of their own intereſts, to rejoice in the diſcovery, and contentedly place their dependence upon that, for their future proviſion.

But there are two cautions neceſſary to be taken by ſuch as let their thoughts run frequently in this train. One that they do not fancy themſelves the peculiar objects of attention, engroſſing it all in preference to the common herd: which would engender ſpiritual pride, and the moſt pernicious kind of ſelf-conceit becauſe hardeſt to be cured. For there is no man but might experience the like particular care, if he would make the like reflection: and if he ſees it plainer in his own caſe than in his neighbour's, it is not becauſe there is more beſtowed upon him, but becauſe he is better acquainted with his own hiſtory, and all the turns and incidents belonging to it, the effects whereof he feels upon himſelf, but only ſees in the groſs, and at a diſtance, upon others. Nor is it owing to his own greater importance, that a conſtant attention is paid to his intereſts, but to that fulneſs of power and richneſs of deſign,

which could adjuſt the concerns of all creatures, ſo that each ſhould receive the entire ſhare of good fortune intended him, without prejudice of the reſt.

The other caution we recommend is, to be very backward in aſcribing extraordinary events to an immediate operation of the agent producing them: for this would lead in the high road to ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm, which by an injudicious zeal to magnify his power, do an injury to his wiſdom, and deſtroy the very eſſence of Providence; which conſiſts not in doing things by dint of force and authority, but by ſo contriving the order of ſecond cauſes, as that they ſhall bring forth the projected purpoſes of themſelves, and the longer or more complicated length they run, ſo much the more admirable is the diſpoſition.

Thus I have attempted to point out the topics, from whence any one may draw evidences of a ſuperintending providence throughout the regions of nature, or mazes of fortune: had I been able to have diſplayed the whole ſcene at large in all its colours, it might not have produced a better effect; for what a man gathers for himſelf, is worth a million ſuggeſted by another; they may perhaps make him put on a ſolemn countenance, or vent a momentary ejaculation, but will hardly ſink deep into his mind and memory. Therefore let each man ſelect ſuch of the before-mentioned heads for his contemplation,

tion, as he finds he can expatiate upon moſt readily, for they will ſtrike the ſtrongeſt impreſſion. By competent practice in this method he will become gradually more expert in purſuing it, extend his obſervation to new ſpots in the proſpect, and daily diſcover freſh lights in objects that had afforded him none before: until he attain a full conviction and intimate perſuaſion of a providence, as well particular, as general, by a kind of ſenſible evidence needing no long argumentation, nor curious diſquiſition to enforce or explain it.

11. But leſt the rovings of his own imagination or ſophiſms of others ſhould interrupt his progreſs, I ſhall endeavour to prepare for removing ſuch obſtacles as they may poſſibly throw in his way. It may be ſaid, we ſee the courſes both of nature and fortune, ſo far as the ſagacity of man can inveſtigate them, proceed from adequate cauſes, whence we have reaſon to conclude that all the reſt proceed from the like: that in all the diſcoveries of cauſes we are able to make, many whereof run in a chain to very great lengths, we never find any thing of intelligence or deſign among them, but they always act neceſſarily, according to their qualities and the concurrence of them, without choice, or purpoſe of what they tend to compleat. Why this we very readily allow, but this heightens our idea of the contrivance that could adapt cauſes acting blindly in a long ſeries of operations,

tions, ſo as to bring things into the ſame admirable order, as if they had been placed by an intelligent hand.

Who does not ſee there is a great deal of art and contrivance in a common watch? not that he thinks of any ſkill or underſtanding in the works themſelves, combining to point out the hour and the minute, as well knowing that all their movements follow neceſſarily upon their ſhapes, and their contexture among one another: but he believes they muſt have been ſo formed and put together by ſome ſkilful artiſt. Well, but ſuppoſe him carried down into a mine, where he finds an engine that collects the metallic particles from their ores, works them up into ſprings and wheels, and dial plates, and hands, and diſpoſes them artfully together ſo as to form a perfect watch, all by mechanical operation: he would now alter his opinion and ſtand convinced that watches might be made without hands, by a blind mechaniſm proceeding without thought, or contrivance of the works it performed. Yet though he loſt his idea of ingenuity being requiſite for making watches, upon ſeeing them generated by mechanical cauſes, and motions concurring to produce them: he would be ſatisfied a much greater muſt have been employed in conſtructing the engine, than he had judged needful while he believed them worked by hand with hammers, files, pincers, and other inſtruments of the trade.

No

No doubt it will be objected here that this is a romantic ſuppoſition, for no body ever ſaw an engine that will make watches: when we do, it will be time enough to ſeek for the artiſt capable of contriving ſo wonderful a machine. It is true, no body ever yet ſaw ſuch an engine, nor I believe ever will; for it would require much greater ſkill to contrive, than the ſons of men are maſters of: nevertheleſs we have all ſeen engines that have brought works to perfection more curious and admirable. Examine a fruit or a ſeed, and you will find it nicely wrapped up in ſeveral integuments, furniſhed with fibres and juices ranged in their exact order, provided with ſprings capable of expanding into ſtem, branches, and leaves, of one particular form and contexture. The plant that bears it may be conſidered as an engine, fitted with roots to gather nutritious particles from the earth, ſap-veſſels to concoct and circulate the juices, twigs that work them firſt into a bud, then a flower, then a knot for perfecting this ſurprizing machine.

Conſider the body of a fowl, what an abundance of works it contains, adapted for carrying on the buſineſs of digeſtion, circulation, ſenſation, and animal motion, in greater art and variety than any clockwork that ever yet was made by human contrivance. What then is an egg, but an engine conſtructed to faſhion all theſe complicated works, and marſhal them in their proper

proper order? or what elſe is the matrix of the parent bird, beſides another engine contrived for making eggs?

Then if we reflect that neither plant nor animal can ſubſiſt or grow without nouriſhment, moiſture, air and warmth, adapted variouſly both in quality and degree to the peculiar uſes of the ſeveral ſpecies; that all matter being homogeneous, the qualities of bodies, ſmall as well as great, muſt depend upon the ſtructure and arrangement of their conſtituent parts: we muſt acknowledge that the elements, together with whatever nutritive or uſeful ariſes in endleſs variety from their commixtures, are ſo many little machines curiouſly contrived to perform their reſpective offices. So that the whole ſyſtem of nature within theſe ſublunary regions, commonly called the world, will appear as one ſtupendous engine, containing, beſides the works appropriated to the generation of organized compoſitions, an infinite multitude of others, properly fitted, and diſperſed in convenient places, where they lie ready to aſſiſt in carrying on the play of vegetative, and vital clockworks.

12. Now to change the ſcene from mechanical to moral agents; whoever can contrive ſalutary rules for the good government of a community and encouragement of arts, ſciences, and manufactures, is juſtly eſteemed an excellent politician, nor could he do it without an uncommon compaſs of knowledge and depth of penetration.

penetration. But to diſtribute talents, abilities, and characters, among an unſociable and ſavage multitude, in ſuch manner as ſhall lead them gradually to ſtrike out order and agreement, commerce and ſcience for themſelves, requires a greater ſkill than human ſagacity can arrive at.

If it be ſaid, the ſteps a people take in growing civilized, are determined by their bodily temperament, their diet, their ways of living, the form and produce of their country, the conduct of their neighbours, and occurrencies befalling among themſelves, occaſioned by natural cauſes; and thus the courſes of the moral world follow thoſe of the natural: this will bring us back to our great engine again, which we find ſo wonderfully conſtructed as not only to produce powers of action, but to determine the harmony of their operations, not only to form the pipes to their perfect tone, but as I may ſay, to aſcertain the particular tunes and concerts and variations that ſhall be played among them. And this immenſe machine, ſtored with ſuch an inconceivable multiplicity of complicated works, muſt appear to every unprejudiced eye to have been the performance of ſome wiſe and excellent artiſt: for we have ſhewn in a former place that it had a beginning, as bearing evident marks that it could not have ſtood for ever in the ſame form and condition we ſee it at preſent.

Now

Now if any one ſhall inſiſt it aroſe ſponta-neouſly out of a Chaos, whoſe particles lay in ſuch poſitions, and had ſuch motions among them as muſt neceſſarily produce a regular world, without any intelligent hand to faſhion it; I don't know how he will make out his aſſertion by probable, or even plauſible conjecture, to our apprehenſion. However it is not worth the while to conteſt the point, for ſuppoſing it proved, there will need a more conſummate wiſdom and extenſive intelligence, to give the motions and poſitions to matter from whence ſo admirable a ſyſtem muſt neceſſarily reſult, than if it had been ranged therein by an immediate operation. For every freſh diſcovery of natural cauſes only ſuſpends our opinion of an operator for the preſent, or rather removes it from the effect to the cauſe: and the further ſteps we can take in tracing them, ſtill encreaſe the neceſſity of a diſcernment capable of purſuing its purpoſes ſurely, through ſo many ſucceſſive ſtages, and intricate channels.

Therefore for my part, I ſhould not care if the ſucceſſion of natural cauſes could be proved eternal, and that as corn grows from the ground, and the grain of it paſſing through the bodies of animals, and the ſtraw being trodden under foot in the farm yard, becomes manure, which grows into freſh corn again ſome following year: ſo the worlds were generated by the action of pre-exiſtent principles, and upon diſſolution become reſolved

reſolved into their principles again, which would produce new worlds out of their materials in ſucceeding ages. For this would make the whole material univerſe but one ſtill more ſtupendous engine, of a contrivance beyond all bounds of imagination, conſtructed by a power, whoſe exiſtence and wiſdom had no beginning, and therefore might well have operated from everlaſting; nor can a time be limited when it muſt have firſt begun to work.

But this is a length of ſpeculation I believe very rarely attempted to be run; and perhaps were as well let alone, having no ſolid ground to run upon. The more judicious will be contented to find a ſtop in their inveſtigations, nor is there hurt in purſuing them, ſo far as they can do it with clearneſs upon the fund of experience and obſervation, and the ſober reaſonings to be deduced therefrom: but in ſo doing, as was obſerved before, they will find the neceſſity of a contriving wiſdom grow upon them the further they go. Mens inſight into natural cauſes will be different in proportion to the ſtrength of their viſion, and opportunities of diſcernment; but they can never find any that was not itſelf an effect of ſome prior cauſe, or does not carry marks of a deſign and contrivance, ſuiting it to the productions it brings forth. Therefore wherever each perſon's line of diſcovery ends, there of courſe he will place the diſpoſing hand; nor need he think amiſs of the length, or ſhortneſs

neſs of other peoples lines, ſince they all terminate upon the ſame object: only the vulgar thinks it ſtanding nearer to him than it really does, whereas the more penetrating, who plainly diſcerns it is not there, does but remove it a few paces further; for to this original, ſooner or later, they both muſt have recourſe.

13. It may be alledged in the ſecond place, that the caſe is different between the works of nature, and art; we know the latter muſt have been conducted with deſign and contrivance, becauſe we have ſeen them frequently compleated by men, who, we know, could not proceed without, and the experience of what has been done within our knowledge, teaches us to diſcern the marks of art, as we know the faces of our acquaintance by having been familiar among them. For a ſavage, who had no artificers of any kind in his country, might perhaps be perſuaded that watches grew from trees, as well as oranges and cocoa-nuts. Thus we get our idea of art from our experience of the performances we have ſeen atchieved by it. But we have not the like experience in the productions of nature, for we never ſaw an operator at work upon them, in whom we might perceive whether he proceeded with thought, and judgement, in the methods taken for bringing them forth.

Why then ſhould we preſume contrivance neceſſary, without warrant from experience of any

any thing ſimilar produced the like way? eſpecially ſince we infer that induſtry has been employed, only upon finding things out of their natural order. When we ſee trees grow in equidiſtant ſpots and rows, or water run along in trenches through higher grounds, we conclude it muſt have been the work of men; becauſe the trees could not have ſprouted up, nor the water worn a channel for itſelf, in that manner. Therefore art being conſtantly diſtinguiſhed by the alteration made in works of natural cauſes, ſhould ſeem an evidence that there is none of it in them: becauſe we could not diſcover what is artificial, ſo readily as we do upon inſpection, if it had not a peculiar characteriſtic wanting in every thing natural.

To this I ſhall reply, that there are different arts proceeding ſeverally upon principles and rules of their own, and therefore have a ſufficient characteriſtic to diſtinguiſh them from others. When we find ſeams in a cloth, we know there has been art uſed upon it after it came from the loom, which does not prove there was none employed in the weaving, but only that the arts of the ſempſtreſs and the taylor were different from that of the weaver: for there would be more ſkill requiſite to make a ſhirt, or a coat in one piece, ſo exactly to fit the wearer, than to make the cloth firſt, and work it up to his meaſure afterwards. Our manufactures for the moſt part paſs through many hands, each artiſt preparing

preparing materials for the next to exerciſe his induſtry upon: but the marks of art appearing in the performances of the latter, derogate nothing from the ſkill exhibited in thoſe of the former; ſo neither does the contrivance diſtinguiſhable in them all, deſtroy the evidence of it in thoſe original materials the firſt operator fetches directly from the ſhop of nature; which contain a greater variety of parts, a nicer ſtructure and accuracy of diſpoſition, than any compoſition that can afterwards be framed out of them.

Nor do there want characteriſtics ſufficient to diſtinguiſh the works of human induſtry from the productions of nature, without ſuppoſing the marks of contrivance appropriated to one of them alone: for the former are more clumſily put together, compoſed of groſſer materials, with aukward joinings by ſeams, tenons, nails, and glues, betraying the imperfections of their workman to the eye; and not like the latter interwoven with fine threads running imperceptibly among the parts, ſo that you cannot ſee what holds them together, nor where one begins, and another ends. If we admire the contrivances of art, it is either comparatively with the ordinary performances of art, which afford us the pleaſure of novelty; or becauſe they add ſome improvement to what has been done by nature, though [illegible] additions be not worked with

ſo

ſo maſterly a hand as the foundation they advanced upon.

A tree ſo well imitated in wax work, with branches, leaves, bloſſoms, and fruit, as that the beholder ſhall be ready to take it for a real one, ſtrikes the eye with admiration, becauſe ſurpaſſing whatever we have ſeen before of the kind, and beſpeaks a nicety and dexterity of execution in the maker: but examine the parts and internal ſtructure, and you will find it nothing comparable to the original, which yet we take little notice of, becauſe it is ſo common, growing out of the ground without any trouble of ours to form it. We think the elegancies of a garden far beyond the rude confuſion of a wilderneſs, over-run with briars and weeds: but the gardener, were he capable of making the trees, the flowers and the turf he employs, would find much more thought and contrivance requiſite for the taſk, than he did in the proper diſpoſition of them among his walks, and plantations. Thus in the fineſt performances of human induſtry, man only gives the finiſhing ſtroke, contributing little from his own fund to the exquiſiteneſs of the work, in compariſon of what he draws from elſewhere.

Another difference between the two kinds of productions is this, that man performs his works by an immediate operation, and though he may run ſome of them conſiderable lengths, yet he muſt uſe his vigilance and ſet to his helping

hand from time to time, in the ſeveral ſteps of their progreſs. After he has picked the flax, he muſt take further pains to ſpin the thread, to weave the cloth, to cut out, and make up the garment, and laſtly to apply it to his uſes, he may indeed contrive machines that ſhall go a little way in performing his works, for he can make corn mills and throwing mills, that grind the corn, he muſt elſe have pounded in a mortar, or throw the ſilk he uſed to wind off with his fingers: but then they require correcting, repairing and continual tendency, to ſet, to ſupply them, to take away what is finiſhed, and to aſſiſt them in thoſe parts of the work they are not capable of performing alone. Nor can he, like nature, conſtruct engines that ſhall conſtruct one another in numberleſs ſucceſſions, each compleating its taſk without manual operation to aſſiſt it: nor form ſuch tools as the elements, that ſhall work ſpontaneouſly without a hand to employ them.

14. We commonly diſtinguiſh the works of human production from thoſe of nature, as we do the hand writing of one perſon from another's, not by the neatneſs but peculiar turn of the ſtrokes: for though the writing be fine, it is rather from the cut, than barely the elegance of the letter, that we know from whoſe pen it came. By long and daily acquaintance among natural cauſes, we learn the manner in which they act, and upon ſeeing things formed after

after a different manner, we conclude the hand of man muſt have interfered. If we employ the terms artificial and deſigned, in contradiſtinction to natural and mechanical, it is becauſe cuſtom has appropriated them to the performances of man, who we know by experience cannot act without ſome purpoſe and underſtanding, therefore they mean no more than ſomething done by his ſkill or labour: yet this does not hinder but there may be deſign and contrivance in other productions, nor is it any better than a negative proof, that is, none at all, that we have no experience of an operator ever ſeen working upon them.

Though experience be the ground work of our knowledge, it bears an inconſiderable proportion to the building erected thereupon: as a foundation makes but a ſmall part of the houſe, and indeed is of none other uſe to the family than for ſupporting the offices, and chambers above. Had we no further ſupplies beyond what were received directly from experience, he that had the beſt memory would be the cleverest and moſt accompliſhed man, becauſe he could retain more than another that had a worſe: but every body knows, that judgement and underſtanding are different qualities from memory, though they can make no progreſs without it. We ſee things continually change their forms, new productions appearing, and old ones falling to decay, and we know thoſe fluctuations muſt be made

by certain powers, or cauſes, operating them: and theſe cauſes, however numerous, we commonly range for convenience ſake, under three claſſes, nature, chance, and voluntary operation, each having its peculiar characteriſtic diſtinguiſhing it from the others.

Nature proceeds by neceſſity in a conſtant and ſteady regularity: volition with apprehenſion and deſign of ſome purpoſe to be compleated: but the very eſſence of chance conſiſts in undeſignedneſs, and deviation from rule. As for the natural properties of bodies, they depend upon their ſtructure, inviſible organizations, or upon the modifications of their imperceptible particles: nor will theſe alone ſuffice to give them their activity, but ſerve only to turn or diſperſe the force of ſome other ſpring upon the ſubjects they affect. For nothing is more unanimouſly agreed among thoſe who have looked moſt narrowly into the nature of bodies, than they do not act originally from themſelves, but only tranſmit an action received by impulſe from one another. So that plants vegetate, animal circulations go on, lead preſſes downwards, ſteel recoils, fire diſſipates, lightning rends, ſalts, acids, drugs, menſtruums exert their vigour, by virtue of a force thrown into them from elſewhere. Nobody can tell from what channel to derive this mighty force: one may conjecture an ether repelling, or innumerable ſtreams of ſtill more ſubtil matter continually pervading them;

them; and ruſhing with violence in all directions, but whether we can find it or no, there muſt be an inexhauſtible fund of activity ſomewhere, to work all thoſe ſurprizing effects we ſee produced around us. And if we could clearly diſcover the ether, or the ruſhing torrent, ſtill we ſhould want another ſource to ſupply them with the force we know is not their own, ſince they are but fluid bodies, conveying an impulſe firſt imparted to them, and having none other motions than thoſe they had taken from ſomething elſe before.

If we turn our thoughts next to voluntary agency, we ſhall find it by examples of what we do ourſelves, proceeding in another manner; not with a force tranſmitted from any thing external, but exerted originally by a power of our own: motives may recommend, but the action begins in the agent himſelf. For if you requeſt a friend to do ſomething, how much ſoever you may be eſteemed the cauſe of what is done, you convey no efficacy to him for the doing it: for he could have done it without your aſking, but bodies could not perform their offices without the ſecret ſprings that ſet them at work.

Let us now conſider the third claſs of cauſes, thoſe aſcribed to chance, and we ſhall find they can have had no beginning in themſelves, but follow upon the operation of the other two: for either natural or voluntary cauſes muſt be at work, before there can be any chance what event

they ſhall produce. Though we act always with apprehenſion of ſome purpoſe to be attained, yet other conſequences oftentimes enſue than thoſe we apprehended, and this opens the door to chance. A man ſhoots at a rat in his yard, and kills a chicken which he did not intend, therefore we call this accidental: but he muſt have ſhot, or no accident at all could have enſued. Or he throws with a pair of dice, and we ſay it is chance what caſt will come up: perhaps that comes up he wiſhes, but he cannot be ſaid to have deſigned it, for deſign implies a knowledge, real or imaginary, of the meaſures proper to compaſs it, which he has not: yet he muſt throw, or there can be no caſt at all, for chance has no power to do any thing without him.

But chance takes place likewiſe in events wherewith human agency has nothing to do: yet there muſt be natural cauſes in motion, before any thing can fall out accidentally among them; it is only our uncertainty of their concurrence and powers, that gives chance a title to the production. When a man plants a hazel he does not think it accidental that he ſhould gather nuts therefrom, and not ſtrawberries; but if he receives a foreign plant he has never ſeen before, nor had any account of, he may reckon it a chance whether it ſhall bear nuts, or pulpy fruit, whether white, or red, or yellow bloſſoms. We do not apprehend it in the power

power of chance to make the ſun ſhine at midnight, becauſe the times of his riſing depend upon the known courſes of nature: but nothing is eſteemed more caſual than the weather, yet rain and ſtorms and thunders and ſerene airs proceed from natural cauſes, which muſt have their certain effect according to their reſpective qualities and proportions, and if we knew them exactly, we might calculate the variations of weather, as well as changes of the moon.

15. Thus among all the operations falling under our notice, there is but one ſource we know of, from whence they could originally derive: volition being the only power capable of beginning action or giving an impulſe it did not firſt receive. For nature is nothing more than a conveyance, whoſe channels in ſome meaſure we can trace, conducting activity from one ſubſtance to another: and chance grows like an excreſcence from the ſituation, the circumſtances attending, or mutual concurrence of other cauſes. Therefore when we aſcribe the beginning of action to a voluntary agent, we are ſo far from contradicting or departing from experience, that we build entirely upon that bottom, becauſe we have no experience of any thing beſides, that can act otherwiſe than by tranſmitting an operation already begun. And whoever ſuppoſes a ſubſtance involuntarily ſelf-moving, or cauſing a new impulſe not in being before, builds upon meer hypotheſis, without

any fact within the compaſs of his obſervation to ſupport it. Whereas he that holds the contrary, does it becauſe experience of his own actions teaches him that he begins them himſelf, but that every thing acting involuntarily proceeds in another manner, only carrying on an operation begun by ſome other agent.

But of the works we effect ourſelves, ſome are intentional, others undeſigned; among thoſe we produce with deſign, ſome are done eaſily and careleſly, others with art, contrivance, labour, and ſtudy, in different degrees of greater or leſs: and we judge of thoſe degrees upon examination of the performance, where the hand is unknown, by the fineneſs of the parts, manner of the diſpoſition, ſtages of the operation, and length of the meaſures neceſſary to be thought on for compleating it. Why then may not we apply this rule founded on experience to the productions of nature? which being found exquiſite in their workmanſhip, admirable in their diſpoſition, and perfected through a long ſeries of operations preparing for one another, may warrant us to judge from theſe marks, how conſummate and boundleſs muſt be the wiſdom of their author.

Nor yet can we infer that his works muſt be operoſe, becauſe we are conſcious of our own being ſo, for we know by experience that in proportion to the progreſs a man has made in his art or ſcience, he ac- exper-

neſs, and takes in more comprehenſive views at a glance, which facilitate his work, and enable him to lay his ſchemes the more readily. There is no labour in volition nor intelligence of objects clearly apprehended, labour and wearineſs reſide in the limbs, or corporeal inſtruments we employ as well in meditation as in action, difficulty and trouble ſpring from the inveſtigation of knowledge we have not, or the obſtructions met with in tracing out a plan not yet lying compleat before us. But that power which was the beginning of all action, could have no acquiſition of knowledge to make, becauſe there was nothing external to furniſh him with the lights; nor ever rectify his plan, becauſe there is nothing beſides his own works to ſuggeſt an amendment. Nevertheleſs the conſciouſneſs of our own doing many things undeſignedly and accidentally, may ſtill leave a ſuſpicion that chance has ſome ſhare in what we ſee around us: but ſuppoſing this ſuſpicion warrantable, we may know that nature was not of her production, by the regularity, and tendency to profitable purpoſes, apparent in it.

For chance works always at random, without rule or aim, and though ſhe may now and then hit upon ſomething regular or advantageous, it is very rarely, and then intermingled among a thouſand wild, and fruitleſs vagaries. Tully tells us, a hog has been known to make a perfect with his ſnout upon the ground, but nobody

nobody ever ſaw, or thought it poſſible to ſee, the whole poem of Ennius ſcratched out in that manner: and I believe he might have added ſafely, that no man ever ſaw a ſingle A written by a hog, without a multitude of other irregular ſcratches round about it. If we had left a number of letters upon a table written on bits of card, and returning after ſome time into the room, ſhould find them lying upon the floor in ſuch manner as to compoſe a grammatical ſentence; we ſhould certainly believe they had been placed by ſomebody, and not bruſhed off the table accidentally: what then ſhould hinder, but that, upon finding the elements diſpoſed into organized bodies, whether animal or vegetable, we may conclude the cauſes that brought them into that order were provided with intention they ſhould produce this effect? But it is ſaid the bits of card, however they came upon the ground, muſt have taken ſome poſition or other, and there was as much poſſibility they ſhould take that of a ſentence, as any other you can imagine; for ſuppoſe you have only four of them which you place in a line blindfold, and then find they ſpell the word HAND, it was but twenty-three to one againſt their ſo doing: and if they had ſtood in any other poſition, as DNHA which makes no word at all, there was the like chance of twenty-three to one againſt its ſo happening. Therefore we have no reaſon to admire any particular order we ſee things ſtands in, ſince at all

all events they muſt have taken ſome poſition, with reſpect to one another equally unlikely: for it is not the ſingularity of their poſition, which belongs alike to every one they could be caſt into, but its reſemblance with thoſe poſitions man uſes to range them in for ſerving his purpoſes, that makes us believe it his doing. For order is relative to our apprehenſions; every number of things muſt lie in ſome certain ſituation with reſpect to one another, which will appear orderly to a perſon familiarly acquainted with it: but we term that order, which correſponds with thoſe manners of arrangement it ſuits our convenience moſt frequently to obſerve.

Very well, admit all this to be as alledged: nevertheleſs that reſemblance of the letters with the manner in which man ordinarily places them for his purpoſes, will be thought an invincible preſumption by every one, of their being ſo placed by deſign: therefore why ſhould not the ſame reſemblance with the works of deſign, which we behold in the productions of nature be deemed as invincible a preſumption of their being formed with intention of their yielding thoſe benefits received from them by mankind, or anſwering thoſe ends we ſee them attain? And even ſuppoſing, what cannot eaſily be ſuppoſed, that the component parts of them might have fallen into that order by chance, yet conſidering by what a long ſeries of operations, and through how many complicated channels they

they were brought thither, it was millions of millions to one they had not: ſo that in every caſe the believer has all this advantage over the infidel, there being theſe immenſe odds, that he is in the right rather than the other.

Which odds, were there nothing ſurer to go upon, might ſatisfy any reaſonable perſon; eſpecially when he reflects, that we have not abſolute certainty for our ground of proceeding in the common tranſactions of life. For, how know we the properties of bodies unleſs by conſtant experience of their effects? we cannot penetrate into the imperceptible cauſes whereon they depend: but if theſe cauſes were brought together by chance, there is a poſſibility that the ſame chance may ſuddenly remove them, and ſubſtitute others of a contrary effect: ſo that in aſcribing the order of nature to deſign, if we have not mathematical demonſtration, we have at leaſt as good aſſurance as that the houſe will not fall upon our heads, that the wood we throw upon the fire will not burſt like gunpowder, that the victuals we eat will not poiſon us: for we cannot mathematically demonſtrate theſe things, yet are none of us uneaſy, or diſturbed at the want of it, but reſt contented upon the baſis of experience, and ſuch knowledge of the powers and qualities of bodies, as we can gather therefrom.

16. But the third and moſt plauſible objection againſt the wiſdom of nature is drawn from the faults,

faults, imperfections, and trifling productions, alledged to be found abounding therein. How many diſeaſes and miſhapen forms do we ſee among plants and animals? how often does nature fail in midway, beginning but not perfecting her ſeeds, and embrios? how many unavailing meteors, toſſings of ſand upon the ſhore and duſt about in the air, that ſerve to no purpoſe? how many blights and damps, ſcorching heats and corroſive airs, waſte, and wear away her works? how many accidents happen to man, brought on by a concurrence of uncommon cauſes, but attended with no conſequences either good, or bad? and how many others tending to his diſappointment, trouble, and damage?

All theſe may ſeem not barely a negative evidence carrying no marks of deſign, but a poſitive, ſhewing there was none in their production: for it may be urged that if the apparent tendency of meaſures to an end be the proof upon which we judge of there being an intelligence employed in contriving them, thoſe which are wholly nugatory, tending to no end at all, or which fruſtrate the purpoſes purſued by other meaſures already taken, cannot have been conducted with deſign, as bearing an oppoſite character. When nature forms her plants in curious organizations proper for yielding their encreaſe, we think ourſelves aſſured, the end purſued thereby muſt be to produce ſeeds and fruits, either

either for propagating their ſpecies, or ſerving the uſes of man: but when blights, or chills, or other cauſes render this purpoſe abortive, it will be ſaid theſe cannot have proceeded from the ſame hand, or at leaſt muſt have been accidental, unthought of, and extraneous to the plan. For it is inconſiſtent to imagine the ſame deſign can contain a long train of meaſures for perfecting a work, and others at the ſame time for defeating it.

But to make this objection valid, we muſt have another ſupport to under-prop it, to wit, that we know preciſely the whole of the deſign, or at leaſt that it muſt be ſimilar to thoſe of our own framing; which is a foundation we do not care to truſt to in judging of one anothers performances: for we are very frequently convinced a thing was done with deſign, where we cannot poſſibly gueſs what the deſign ſhould be, nor find it anſwering any end that we ſhould endeavour to compaſs ourſelves. Nor is it a proof that meaſures have been taken in vain, becauſe they fail of compleating the purpoſe we expected to have ſeen anſwered by them, unleſs we know all their tendencies, and can be well aſſured, there was none other end whereto they were neceſſarily conducive ſo far as they have gone. Surely it is too haſty a judgement to pronounce all imperfect formations, and all interruptions or irregularities in the works of nature uſeleſs, when we many times find our own uſes in them.

Our

Our aſparagus, our cauliflowers, and our garden ſtuff, are but half formed productions, which when come to their natural perfection, are no longer fit for our tables: we find a place there for green gooſeberries, and half grown apricots, and do not reliſh our peas and beans when ripened to their full maturity. Bezoar, civet, and caſtor, are the diſeaſes of animals: gums, oak-galls, and variegated leaves, the diſtempers of plants. Knee-timber, the diſtortion of nature, is more valuable than the ſtrait: and double bloſſoms, which ſeem her errors as ſeldom yielding ſeed, are coveted by us in contempt of the ſingle. We prune and poll and cut our trees into unnatural ſhapes: and make capons, wethers, and oxen by mutilation. As much as we deſpiſe the vile tribes of inſects, there are ſome of them of conſequence enough to claim our regard, as the cochineal, the bee, and the ſilkworm. The moſt trifling objects ſometimes deſerve our attention, or aſſiſt us in the diſcoveries of ſcience: little accidents have an influence upon our affairs: even diſappointments and troubles furniſh a great part of our employment, and bear no inconſiderable ſhare in forming the tempers, the virtues, and the characters.

Some commodities of natural growth, and many of our manufactures, ſeem formed on purpoſe to be deſtroyed again, as coals, peat, candles, paſtry, gunpowder, becauſe their uſe lies

lies ſolely in the conſumption. Nor is it deemed an inconſiſtency in human underſtanding, to contrive engines for breaking to pieces the corn it has been induſtrious to cultivate, or to render it unfit either for ſeed or food in making ſtarch, paſtes, or powders, or to extract a ſmall part of its virtue, ſpoiling all the reſt, in the brewery or diſtillery. Why then ſhould we arraign nature of inconſiſtency for making imperfect productions, or deſtroying thoſe ſhe has compleated; until we know what further compoſitions ſhe may, or may not form of their crudities, and what diſtilleries ſhe may raiſe from their corruption?

But we very confidently decide, that every thing muſt be nugatory which has not a viſible tendency to the ſervices of man: as if we knew all the channels by which our uſes are conveyed to us, or that what does not advance them immediately could not do it remotely. Why muſt we needs pronounce the earthworm an unprofitable reptile, becauſe we cannot eat his fleſh, nor make gloves of his ſkin? perhaps he aſſiſts the plowman to fructify the earth by turning it continually, or opens the mould among the fibrous roots of graſs, where the ſpade could not reach without bruiſing them to pieces: ſo that we may be beholden to him in part for our daily bread, and owe him more thanks than anger for defiling the turf in our gardens. Why muſt it neceſſarily be a waſte in nature that ſuch

multitudes of ſeeds and vegetables periſh by weather or other accidents? how know we that their putrefaction is not a diſtillery from whence the air we breathe is ſupplied with that vivifying ſpirit whereby it ſuſtains us? we may know by the fermentation and warmth ariſing from them when laid in heaps, that they contain an active ſpirit: and though upon holding our faces over them, we find it rather of a ſuffocating than enlivening quality, becauſe taken in too great quantities, yet ſo we ſhould brandy if poured down by pints, which nevertheleſs proves an excellent cordial properly adminiſtered.

The more narrowly men pry into the courſes of nature, their mutual dependencies and effects upon one another, they daily diſcover new uſes unknown or unthought of before, and that even in things vulgarly eſteemed pernicious: from whence it is a reaſonable preſumption that there remain innumerable uſes ſtill behind, which never will and never can be diſcovered while we have no better faculties than thoſe allotted us at preſent. But even admitting the total uſeleſſneſs of ſome phenomena; this would not invalidate our argument with reſpect to thoſe whoſe uſes are manifeſt. We do not reaſon thus in regard to one another, if we ſee a man act undeſignedly in ſome inſtances, we do not conclude he does ſo in others, where we can diſcern and approve his deſign. And it will be enough for all neceſſary purpoſes, if we ſatisfy our-

ourſelves there is a wiſdom in the productions formed around us, though it ſhould not extend to them all without exception. Nay the vulgar, who ſeem to apprehend chance as having a joint ſhare in the government of the world, find therein another ſubject for wiſdom to work upon, in preventing or remedying the errors of chance, and making ſuch ample proviſion for thoſe formations which are liable to accident; that there may be enough both for uſe and for waſte: an inſtance whereof we have in the rain, which is raiſed in ſuch quantities, as though one half be loſt in the ſea, the other half ſuffices to water the land.

But for my part, I ſee no reaſon to determine upon the abſolute uſeleſſneſs of any proviſion: if there be ſome which afford room to believe they do no benefit to man, and others from whence he reaps a trifling advantage not at all proportionable to the vaſtneſs of preparation, (of which there might be inſtances produced,) it ſeems a more probable concluſion, that they were made for other Beings, and that whatever is waſte to us was expedient to them. For why ſhould we perſuade ourſelves the boundleſs univerſe muſt contain no more inhabitants than thoſe crawling about this little globe? or what elſe beſides vulgar prejudice makes us think it impoſſible, that life, ſenſe and activity, can ſubſiſt without ſuch groſs organizations as render us viſible to one another? And as we know there

there are little animals which live by the deſtruction and putrefaction of larger bodies, ſo that it is not improbable there may be other creatures who find their uſes in the ſame materials that ſupply us with ours; but being of very different natures receive their benefit from different compoſitions and modifications of them, which are wholly uſeleſs or pernicious to animals.

17. Having gotten over theſe objections, we muſt leave it to each man to apply the remedies to ſuch particular ones as are apt to ſtart up occaſionally from events relating to himſelf. But a little calm reflection may quickly ſatisfy him, that theſe temptations to murmur ariſe from a falſe idea of the deſign purſued by providence, which he meaſures by his own ſelfiſh narrow views. We run eagerly after pleaſure, profit, or the proſecution of ſome preſent prevailing deſire, and if things happen croſs to our wiſhes, think ourſelves neglected, or unfavourably dealt with; becauſe we cannot conceive any thing contrived wiſely that does not help us forward in our career. Whereas providence conſtantly aims at the general good, or the whole good of particulars in preference to their temporary advantage or indulgence: we have innumerable ſources of gratification afforded us, but the withholding ſuch of them as would be attended with miſchievous conſequences, is no leſs a kindneſs, though we do not ſee it. For we take in our proſpect by halves; and not unfre-

quently complain of thoſe very circumſtances for obſtructing our ſchemes, which promote them moſt effectually, or furniſh us with the opportunities of laying them.

How grievous does it appear to the farmer when the rains or froſts prevent his ſowing, or frequent ſhowers double his charges, his labour, his care, his attendance, in a catching harveſt? I ſhall not urge upon him the trite fable of Jupiter letting a farm with command of the weather, and the tenant ruining himſelf by that very privilege; becauſe perhaps he will not believe but he could have managed it more wiſely. I ſhall rather ſuggeſt to him a conſideration more obvious to his own diſcernment, which is, that if the ſeaſons were conſtantly favourable, and the crops certain, the buſineſs of agriculture would be ſo eaſy that gentlemen might manage their own lands by help of a bailiff: ſo there would be no farm to let for him to get his living by, nor could he expect to earn any thing more than the wages of a common labourer.

And in all conditions of life, it is common for diſappointment and difficulty to quicken the induſtry, whet the wits, and ripen the experience, by which we work out our advantages and pleaſures; and for troubles paſſed through to give reliſh to ſubſequent enjoyments. But theſe good conſequences will not appear at the time when we want their comfort moſt, without a proper diſpoſition of mind

expect them; which being not attainable with a wiſh, requires our moſt ſedulous endeavours to inure ourſelves to it. By contemplation of things apparently providential, and diligent obſervation of events that terminate better than they promiſed, we may gain an habitual perſuaſion of a wiſdom and goodneſs employed in conducting them: which will beget a reaſonable preſumption of the like having been exerted where we do not ſee the marks of them. As practice renders the faculties more acute, we ſhall find our proſpect gradually enlarge, diſcovering ſeveries of providence in places where we ſaw nothing but chance and trifle before: until we form ſomething of a ſyſtem, and make an imperfect acquaintance with the ways in which wiſdom uſes to proceed.

But there is a caution to be taken with regard to the objects whereto we direct our obſervation: for if we ſuffer our zeal to run beyond our reaſon, we may chance to ſee the hand of providence where it is not, and while we fancy ourſelves following its traces, may wander into the wilds of ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm, full ſtocked with dreams, omens, ſigns, prognoſtics, judgements, and other deluſive phantoms. If any extraordinary ſignifications be vouchſafed at any time, they come unthought, and manifeſt themſelves inſtantaneouſly, like lightning, by their own ſtrength and brightneſs: therefore it is vain to think of reducing them into a ſcience

which can be built only upon the bottom of familiar experience. But it is in nature and the ordinary courſes of events, that we are to ſeek for ſuch of the divine counſels as are fit for us to know; for all the motions of nature lying in the hand of God, there is no doubt of his being able to manifeſt to us ſo much as he judges proper therein: this then is the book from whence we are to draw our ſcience, and it behoves us to ſtudy the ſtile and method of it carefully. The conſciouſneſs of our ſhort-ſightedneſs may teach us to expect many things unaccountable: but whatever is ſo, belongs not to us to deſcant upon, nor can we juſtly take any thing for a ſign or a judgement, without tracing a viſible connection between cauſes and effects.

Nor will it ſuffice to conſider barely the appearances of nature or train of events, without obſerving further what effect they have upon the moral world, and in what manner they ſeverally contribute towards forming the tempers, the apprehenſions, the deſires, and ſentiments, whereon our uſes and enjoyments depend as much as upon things external. But if what has been offered in the former parts of this work ſhould happen to gain credit, ſo as to make it appear probable that this life is a preparation for the next: not only as our good or evil conduct draws on its reſpective reward or puniſhment, but as our habits of thougnt and action operate

operate upon the ſpiritual body we carry within us, and gradually work out the powers, the talents, the genius, ſuited to the functions we are deſtined to perform hereafter: this will open a new field of obſervation, wherein though we cannot tell preciſely what are the particular uſes of every thing we ſee, yet we may gather from the variety of profeſſions, conditions and ways of life, whereinto men are caſt by nature, or led by accident, that there are further uſes deſigned beyond thoſe we diſcern, and that whatever appears unaccountable in our preſent diſpenſations, has its reference to future conſequences, in the regions lying out of our ken.

After competent practice in theſe exerciſes, we ſhall begin to look upon every thing as providential, not indeed originally ſo as exhibiting marks of a deſign, but capable of being employed in it, and deriving their evidence of being ſo employed from the opinion we have already eſtabliſhed upon the foundation of other evidences. And if we try to frame a theory of the particular ſteps whereby they promote their deſign, it may help to ſtrengthen our opinion and can do no hurt, provided nothing be admitted inconſiſtent with the facts we experience. This idea of every thing providential, according to the ſtrength of its impreſſion, will infallibly beget a proportionable ſenſe of our being continually under the care and direction of providence, ſo that nothing happens to us in vain,

but even trifling occurrencies and ſiniſter accidents terminate in ſome ſolid advantage, greater or leſſer, nearer or remote. Nevertheleſs in order to reap the full benefit of ſuch a ſenſe, we ſhall miſs of if we look for it in the wrong quarter, I muſt repeat what I have remarked before, that the advantage to be expected is not always the removal of our preſent diſtreſs, nor the procurement of any thing we have now in our deſires. Yet the perſuaſion of diſtant good, to ariſe from what paſſes with us, is an alleviation of preſent uneaſineſs: or at leaſt takes off that regret which doubles the preſſure, and perhaps makes the whole weight. For it has been ſaid of old, that pain of itſelf is no evil, but takes its ſting from reflection: trouble and affliction certainly fix their ſeat there. When men look upon what befals them as an injury or cruelty, then it is they are hurt by what they feel: but if there be any pleaſurable object ready whereon reflection can be turned, the evil will ſit light; or at worſt there will be gleams of comfort at every little interval between the attacks of pain: and we have no reaſon to deſpiſe the remedy that gives a partial relief, becauſe it does not work a perfect cure.

18. But the cares of providence, how univerſally ſoever extended, do not ſuperſede the neceſſity of our own cares to avail ourſelves of the opportunities put into our hands. What though the earth be ſtored with food of all kinds by the

bounty

bounty of heaven, we muſt gather and prepare it for ourſelves, or ſhall ſtarve in the midſt of plenty. What though a thouſand curious engines be continually at work in the human body to concoct, to ſecrete and diſtribute the juices neceſſary for preſerving the vigour of health: yet we muſt aſſiſt their play by temperance, and exerciſe, or ſometimes by medicine, or the machine will quickly run into diſorder. For our powers of action, and the ſenſe given us to direct them, being among the proviſions made for our benefit, by abuſing them we may eaſily fruſtrate the effects of all the reſt, therefore it behoves us to apply them ſo as may conduce moſt to our happineſs, the proper goal whereto we are to ſteer.

Now there needs not much argument to perſuade men they will be happy in the gratification of their deſires ſo long as it may laſt with reliſh; nor can they fail of knowing by experience, that deſire is not of ſo inflexible a nature but that it may be made to take a new ply, and brought to faſten upon different objects by care and induſtry. But providence having the diſpoſal of all events univerſally, its purpoſes can never be defeated: therefore ſo far as our deſires coincide with them, they can never be croſſed or diſappointed: ſo the road to happineſs is plain where we can diſcern what thoſe purpoſes are, and ſurmount the difficulty of bending deſire until it falls into the ſame line.

Our

Our idea of providence will lead us to conclude, it aims at the general good of the creation, or the whole good of individuals, and even their temporary accommodations and enjoyments whenever compatible with the other two: therefore this is the courſe it will be moſt expedient for us to put ourſelves into. Our amuſements, and conveniencies, and the ordinary purſuits of life, do not lead us out of our way, while we have nothing of greater moment to purſue: but theſe are to be regarded only as occaſional employments to keep us in action, or underparts of our deſign to be taken up or laid aſide with indifference; for our principal attention is due to ſecuring the main chance, and making our ſervice as extenſive to our fellow-creatures as opportunity will permit.

This is properly our buſineſs and the perfection of our nature, for children are ſelfiſh and ſhort-ſighted, their views confined always to their own pleaſures, or wants of the preſent moment: but as they grow up, their proſpect opens, and their ſenſibility ſpreads, they can feel a pleaſure in making advances towards diſtant good, and find a conſcious complacence in the good offices they do to others. The difference between manly and childiſh lies in the largeneſs and importance of deſign, with a diſregard of humour, appetite, and indulgence, never ſuffering them to occupy our thoughts a moment longer than we judge expedient. Nor

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can we be ſaid to have arrived at the perfection of manhood, until whatever appears moſt profitable upon the whole, becomes an object of real deſire, ſo as to afford a preſent gratification in the ſteps taken to proſecute it: and makes us feel a ſenſible complacence in any diſpenſation of providence we can conceive conducing to our own or the general benefit, though in the remoteſt futurity. Theſe then are the points it behoves us to labour moſt induſtriouſly, as being our greateſt improvement, which if once compleatly attained, ſo as that diſtant good could be made the ſubject of joy and deſire equally with preſent, would both conduct us ſureſt to our goal, and render our intermediate journey pleaſant.

But it is not enough to take up a general reſolution of purſuing always the greater good, for we do not always know in what quarter it lies, and when we clearly diſcern our way, cannot always bring ourſelves to travel in it. For the conſequences of actions often terminate ſo contrary to firſt appearance, the meaſures requiſite for attaining an advantage are ſo intricate, and ſo many things to be taken into conſideration which do not eaſily preſent themſelves, that we need particular rules and maxims to ſupply the deficiency of our judgement, and ſerve us reſpectively for guides in each particular ſituation of circumſtances.

Then

Then deſire, though capable of yielding to controul, yet will not come and go, ſtop ſhort, or change its courſe, upon the word of command; but requires art and management to model it into the ſhape we want. The neceſſities and occaſions of life oblige us often to confine our whole attention to the preſent inſtant, and to objects lying cloſe before us: ſome innocent deſires muſt be nouriſhed to rouze us to activity, and others not quite ſo, may be uſefully employed to aſſiſt in maſtering the more dangerous: all this diſcipline we ſhould ſcarce have ſkill or ſtrength enough to practiſe, without ſome methods and incitements ſuggeſted to help us. Add to this, that imagination bearing a very conſiderable ſway in our motions, it will be of the utmoſt conſequence to have this faculty well ſtored with opinions, ſentiments, inclinations, and habits, that it may aſſiſt readily in executing the dictates of reaſon, or act as her deputy in the hurry of buſineſs, or upon ſudden emergencies, when there is no room for ſober deliberation. Theſe rules, and methods, and ſentiments, neceſſary to direct the judgement, to rectify the will, and purify the imagination, make up what I conceive is properly called Religion: which is to be calculated rather for the uſes of the heart than of the head, by how much of greater importance it is to practiſe what we know, than to encreaſe our knowledge.

Therefore

Therefore I take Religion to be diſtinguiſhed from Philoſophy by having its principal reſidence in the imagination: not that I mean to inſinuate thereby that it is a thing imaginary, or the tenets of it arbitrary; but a man may lay up in mind the diſcoveries of his underſtanding, and continue to uſe them, after he has utterly forgotten the foundations whereon they were grounded. So likewiſe the produce of ſound and ſolid reaſoning may be inculcated into another, who has not capacity to judge of them himſelf, and to him they will be meer perſuaſions of the mind; nevertheleſs they may prove of excellent ſervice and neceſſary uſe for his conduct. And when we conſider that theſe perſuaſions are to be calculated for general benefit, as likewiſe how few there are who could enter into the grounds of them, if laid open ever ſo carefully to their view, a man that has the good of others at heart will be content to find leſs of rational inference and connection, than he would deſire upon his own private account. Theſe conſiderations open into a new field, which we ſhall endeavour to examine more diſtinctly in the remaining part of our progreſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Religion.

IF any body ſhall expect, from the concluſion of the laſt chapter and title of this, to ſee me enter upon forming a compleat ſcheme of rules both for doctrine and practice, he muſt have a much higher or a meaner opinion of my underſtanding, than I think any man can deſerve: the former, if he ſuppoſes me equal to the taſk, the latter, if he believes me capable of ſo wild an attempt without probability of ſucceſs. For to perfect ſuch a deſign, one had need not only to know the things above, things round about us, and underſtand human nature in general, but likewiſe the paſſions, affections, apprehenſions, capacities, frailties, and advantages belonging to it: together with what I may call the materia medica of morality, that is, the conceptions perſuaſions, maxims, cuſtoms, inſtitutions employable therein, their ſeveral efficacies or tendencies, their miſchievous as well as ſalutary qualities, and to what particular diſorders or purpoſes of invigorating the health, they are reſpectively applicable.

Yet conſcious as I am of inſufficiency upon theſe points, I ſhould neither grudge nor ſcruple to produce what little I could of my own framing, were ſuch endeavours at all needful: but there

there is no occaſion to undergo the laborious drudgery of making brick without ſtraw, at leaſt until we ſhall have tried what can be done with the materials already ſupplied to our hands. When we find them fail of expectation, it will be time enough to think of doing the beſt we can upon our own bottom: if they do not fail, they will anſwer our purpoſe more effectually than any thing we could have prepared ourſelves: for were it poſſible to ſtrike out a new ſyſtem equally good, this might not be ſo advantageous as building upon an old one. Men are not eaſily put out of their accuſtomed trains of thinking, nor will be found willing to take a new road where every thing muſt appear ſtrange and uncouth: and if they were, could not make ſo good advances as upon grounds that were familiar to them before.

For this reaſon, if there were no better, I am warranted in having recourſe to the doctrines prevailing in theſe countries, borrowing from thence what I may want for my future occaſions, and ſupporting what I take upon the foundations already laid down in the foregoing ſheets. Not that I mean to call in authority to my aid, for this would be departing from my plan: my firſt propoſal being to build entirely upon human reaſon, I cannot conſiſtently therewith take any thing for authority beſides nature and experience; nor did I ſet out in confidence of any mighty feats I ſhould perform, but only to try

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for experiment ſake what might be done by my own induſtry. I am not conſcious of having advanced any thing in contradiction of the opinions generally received as fundamental, nor yet any thing which had not its ſupport independent on them. My not uſing authority ought no more to be taken as a proof of rejecting than receiving it: for it was my buſineſs to go on quietly my own way without taking ſide among contending parties; deſirous of being thought a neutral, as the character moſt ſuitable to that ſpirit of reconcilement I have profeſſed all along. Agreeably with this view I may now proceed to examine, what there is conformable between the diſcoveries of Reaſon and Revelation, and how far they ſupport, illuſtrate, and ſtrengthen each other; if perchance I may produce ſomething thereby that may be ſtiled either a chriſtian Philoſophy, or a rational Chriſtianity.

Not that I can expect to pleaſe every body by making this attempt: for there are people who ſeem to have placed the corner ſtone of their faith in that text. He that is not with us is againſt us, and he that gathereth not with us ſcattereth. With ſuch there is no medium to be preſerved; a favourable word, ſpoken of any they do not like, is taken for a declaration of hoſtility againſt themſelves; as if it were high treaſon in religion and philoſophy to drink a pretenders health. They are more eager to run down an adverſary, than to labour at their own improve-

improvement, as being the leſs troubleſome taſk; and more afraid leſt another ſhould attain any good thing, than that themſelves ſhould miſs of it. For ſeeking their credit rather by differing from others than by their intrinſic merit, they cannot hear with patience, whatever tends to leſſen that difference, which they ſtrive to widen as far as poſſible: ſo that he who preſumes to doubt of a ſingle truth, muſt be a heretic, an infidel, a man of no principles; and he that believes a ſingle point without ſufficient warrant to their liking, muſt be a bigot, an enthuſiaſt, a crafty deſigner upon the liberties of mankind. Perſons of this caſt are not to be worked upon by calm reaſoning; paſſion and poſitiveneſs are the engines to be employed in dealing with them: ſo I look upon them as quite out of my province; the beſt I can hope for is to be taken no notice of, or if they muſt place me in the light of an enemy, I would chuſe to ſtand equally ſo in the eyes of both parties, eſteeming it leſs diſparagement to be thought a ſcatterer, than to gather firebrands of either ſide.

But there are many of a different turn, who judging of opinions by their inherent luſtre, do not want a foil to ſet them off; nor lie under temptation to depreciate what they reject, in order to magnify what they adopt; therefore they are candid and favourable to thoſe who ſeem at wideſt variance from them, glad to find them leſs unreaſonable than they had imagined,

and ready to interpret every thing for the beſt; firm in their own ſentiments, yet ſtill better ſatisfied to find them co-incide with thoſe of others; wiſhing well to their oppreſſors, and therefore rejoiced to ſee the oppoſition reduced to a narrower compaſs, eſteeming their own tenets beneficial, and therefore better pleaſed the more of them can be made appear embraced in ſubſtance by ſuch as ſeemed to reject them in words. Perſons of this character will be likely to lend me an attentive ear, and wiſh me ſucceſs how little ſoever they may expect, or I can promiſe it: but as they ſtand at preſent divided in two different camps, it will be expedient to have a little diſcourſe with each of them ſeparately, before I enter upon my attempt to accommodate matters between both: but in ſo doing I muſt proceed upon the principles peculiar to each, hoping the others will not be ſcandalized at me for ſuppoſing the poſſibility of truth in what they have pronounced falſe, but conſider me, not as laying down any opinion of my own, but uſing what the ſchoolmen call arguments to the man.

2. And firſt I ſhall addreſs myſelf to thoſe who hold the reality of revelations, and genuineneſs of thoſe records by which they have been handed down to our times. Theſe they will acknowledge proceeded from the God of love and truth, who had no end of his own to ſerve therein, but gave them in pure kindneſs

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to mankind: or if they ſuppoſe the advancement of his own glory to have been a motive, yet they will hardly imagine he does any thing for his glory detrimental to his creatures: but rather that his power and his wiſdom were ſo great, as to make the ſame means work out the purpoſes both of Love and Glory. So that the benefit of mankind, if not the ſole thing deſigned yet was deſigned in every diſpenſation, of Providence, as well extraordinary as ordinary: and we may ſay the ſame of all divine inſtitutions, as we are taught to believe of one in particular, That man was not made for the ſabbath, but the ſabbath for man.

The next thing to be conſidered is, in what manner we will conceive that benefit to be operated, whether by a new virtue and efficacy annexed to certain inſtitutions by omnipotence, or by the effect they muſt naturally have upon the minds and conduct of ſuch as practiſe them. I hope I ſhall not give offence, if I am unwilling to admit any thing that looks like charm and magic in Religion; for he that made us and knows minutely all the ſprings of our compoſition, has no need to give a ſupernatural energy to things inſignificant, but can find methods of management ſuited to the nature and condition of his creatures: therefore ſhall preſume that whatever commands come from God are ſuch, as, if we were able to diſcern their expedience, we ſhould ſee it prudent to follow the courſes

they direct to, although they had not been enjoined; ſo that we might regard his precepts as iſſuing from wiſdom rather than authority, as advices of one who knows what is beſt for us, rather than edicts of one whom we durſt not diſobey, were we of ſo happy a temper as always to take advice without the dread of authority to enforce it. From hence it follows that reaſon and nature are the ſame thing as divinity, that whoever ſhould perfectly underſtand one, muſt underſtand both, and every ſtep of real proficiency in either is an advance towards the other.

It has been ſaid by a prelate of no ſmall reputation in the Church, the late Biſhop of London, that Chriſtianity was a republication of natural Religion; now if I were to draw the ſame inference therefrom that has been drawn before, to wit, that it is as old as the creation, and conſequently contains nothing material more than might have been diſcovered by human ſagacity, I know it will be objected that in this republication are inſerted additions of new matters not to be found in the firſt edition: but I know not how to remove the objection, for I can muſter up no arguments even to perſuade myſelf that the myſteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, and operations of the holy Spirit, could ever have been reached by the ſtrongeſt efforts of human reaſon. Nevertheleſs let us examine

mine whether this overthrows our former ſuppoſition, that all diſpenſations of heaven are grounded upon the condition of human nature, and their efficacy dependent thereon: for nature is not what it was when the law of reaſon was firſt written upon the underſtanding, therefore may require freſh additions which were needleſs before.

I ſuppoſe it will be allowed that if a man had not rendered himſelf obnoxious to puniſhment by his fall, he would have needed no redemption, and conſequently no knowledge of the myſteries whereby it might be effected: had his underſtanding not been darkened, he would have wanted no enlightening from above: had his will retained its native vigour, a divine aſſiſtance to ſecond his endeavours had been ſuperfluous. So that theſe additions, though never diſcoverable by the beſt exerted induſtry, yet the expedience of them was founded upon the nature of man: not indeed that wherein he was created, but his preſent corrupted nature. Wherefore the ſtudy of This conduces to the more perfect underſtanding of Them, or at leaſt enables us to make the better application of them to our uſes; as a phyſician ought to know the nature of the diſorder and preſent habit of his patient, before he can adminiſter the remedies he has in ſtore.

Then for that part which is barely a republication, why ſhould we expect miſchief from the exerciſe of reaſon? ſo far as this part extends, we may ſay without offence, that Chriſtianity is as old as the creation: the perfection of morality is ſtill the ſame it ever was, the book of nature wherein were written the eſſences of right and wrong, lies open before us without eraſement, or variation in the pages, ſince their firſt impreſſion: but our faculties are altered, our viſion contracted, and our language divided into a Babel of tongues, ſo that we cannot take in the whole winding periods containing a long ſeries of cauſes and effects, nor purſue remote and intermediate relations to one concluſion; and when we do read the ſubſtance we ſometimes expreſs it in terms contradictory to thoſe employed by one another.

Wherefore a republication might be expedient to new model the ancient text into a conciſer form ſuitable to our comprehenſion, which wanted particular rules and precepts that might put us upon meaſures we did not diſcern the prudence of: and to fix a certain ſtandard of language, which might render our intercourſe among one another more commodious and profitable. Nevertheleſs it will ſcarce be doubted that theſe rules and precepts have a real foundation in right reaſon

reaſon and nature, therefore all fair examination of them upon theſe bottoms, ought with more juſtice to excite our hopes than our alarms: and ſince we know how variouſly men turn their thoughts, how diverſly they connect their ideas, and expreſs themſelves upon the ſame ſentiments, it can as little be doubted that there may be a mixture of conformity in opinions ſeemingly the moſt oppoſite; and that every diſcovery of this is a ſtep towards union, and towards the promoting the cauſe of truth.

I remember to have heard the ſame good Biſhop declare from the pulpit, that we muſt not judge of the ſtrength of human reaſon by the works we ſee now performed by it, becauſe the truths of the Goſpel have inſenſibly infuſed a degree of their own luſtre, and ſoundneſs into the preſent moral philoſophy: and if I may be permitted to add any thing from my own experience to ſo great an authority, I think I have found on converſing with unbelievers, that they have more of the Chriſtian in them than they know of themſelves. Therefore we have leſs reaſon to be afraid of them than our forefathers had: for by endeavouring to enter for a while into their conceptions and following the trains of thinking, if we find nothing to learn by them, we have a chance of attracting them without their perceiving it,

a little nearer to ourſelves than they are willing to come.

Nor do the divine oracles ſhow themſelves averſe to the exerciſe of reaſon; we are exhorted to try all things, and told that we may know of the doctrines whether they be from God: but how can we make trial of any thing without the uſe of our judgment? or how can we know the internal marks of divinity in a doctrine, unleſs by comparing it with thoſe ideas of God we have learned before from natural Religion? And if the truth were known, I am apt to believe the internal evidence is what determines moſt men who do not take up their opinions upon truſt: for the external of all kinds has been ſo perplexed by ſubtle diſputations pro and con, that it requires a compaſs of reading, few have opportunity to go through, to be maſters of the argument; but according as they think well or ill of the doctrine, they admit the ſlighteſt, or reject the ſtrongeſt evidence that can be produced to ſupport it.

We may gather further from the ſtile and manner of the ſcriptures that they were not intended to ſuperſede the uſe of human reaſon, but rather as helps encouraging us to employ it with more alacrity. They are delivered in detached precepts which require judgement to methodize, and from them, together with our natural notices, to ſtrike out a regular ſyſtem of

of conduct. They give contradictory rules, enjoining us to brotherly love, to diligence and induſtry; yet commanding us to hate father and mother, wife and children, and to take no thought for the morrow: for ſufficient unto the day is the evil thereof: things not to be reconciled, nor indeed underſtood, without ſober thought and rational conſtruction. Others unnatural and impracticable. If a man ſmite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left, if he would take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak alſo: until opened by the key of reflection upon human frailty, they appear to contain within, not directions for our ordinary conduct, but admonitions to beware that our natural appetites do not get the maſtery over us, teaching us not ſo much what we are to do, as what we ought to render ourſelves capable of doing. Others delivered in Riddles and Parables, ſo that ſeeing we ſhall not ſee, and hearing we ſhall not underſtand, unleſs by uſing our beſt wits to dig out their latent meaning.

In ſhort the figurative ſtile running throughout the ſacred words, evidently ſuppoſes a fund of knowledge previouſly laid in from other ſources: for figures touch neither the imagination nor the underſtanding, otherwiſe than by their alluſion to things we have been familiarly acquainted with before. Therefore we are told the letter killeth, but the ſpirit maketh alive: now what ſpirit more likely to be meant here

here as having this vivifying quality than that of ſobriety and diſcretion, nouriſhed up to maturity by due exerciſe of the ſeveral means allotted us for ſtrengthening our faculties? For the Spirit of God will not do all our work for us upon any occaſion; it only co-operates with our endeavours, nor will afford us any lights we might have ſtricken out for ourſelves: therefore it behoves us to avail ourſelves of our natural lights and powers ſo far as we can, having no warrant to expect aſſiſtance from above, until we have tried our ſtrength upon the materials found below.

But it is ſaid human reaſon is a dangerous thing, having bewildered many in mazes and fatal errors who have truſted to it: this we do not deny, but is not Scripture too a dangerous thing, having driven multitudes into wild extravagancies and pernicious notions who have truſted to their own haſty interpretations of it? Therefore if the abuſe of a good thing were an argument for the total diſuſe of it, we had beſt do as the Papiſts would have us, that is, wrap up our Bibles as well as our talent of reaſon in a napkin, and content ourſelves with ſuch ſcraps of either as they ſhall pleaſe to deal out among us, cooked up after their own faſhion. Let us reflect that nature is the work of God as well as Revelation, why then ſhould we deſpiſe his gift, and not rather conſider it as another Bible dictated from the ſame mouth?

So

So far as we perceive them to agree, we may reſt aſſured of having the true ſenſe of the author: wherever they ſeem at variance, it is certain we muſt have miſunderſtood one, and a ſhrewd ſuſpicion we may have miſtaken both. What then can we do better than carefully to ſtudy both, and purſue the compariſon between them, in order to apprize us of our miſtake, or remove the cauſe of it, by employing them to explain one another? It is too notorious from frequent and fatal experience to be denied, that the moment a man throws aſide his reaſon, he has little further benefit to expect from revelation: for though the neceſſary duties be written there in ſuch legible characters as that he who runs may read, yet he muſt have learned to read before, or he may ſtand poring over them by the hour without being a whit the wiſer for all he ſees.

Without diſparagement to the holy writings I may queſtion whether, ſtrictly ſpeaking, they contain a perfect rule of doctrine and conduct, yet they may do it in a looſer ſenſe, as containing all that was wanting to ſupply the defects of that other rule God had given us before for many of our uſes: ſo the perfect rule is made up by the aggregate of both, but we may be ſaid to find perfection in the former with the ſame propriety as we are ſaid to find health in the preſcriptions of a conſummate phyſician; not that we are to live altogether upon phyſic, nor expect

expect to ſupport our health without our common food, but becauſe the medicines reſtore our blood to its purity, and our ſolids to their original tone, thereby bringing our victuals to agree with us and nouriſh us.

4. We are told the Goſpel was preached to the poor, that is the vulgar and illiterate, whoſe opinions, ſentiments, and apprehenſions, fluctuate from time to time: ſo that what was a proper regimen for the Jews and Gentiles juſt fallen under the Roman yoke, may not ſuit the occaſions of the poor in thoſe European countries. And it is admitted by divines, that ſome precepts are not univerſally binding, but only upon the perſons to whom they were delivered: yet they are not diſtinguiſhed in the text from the general by an introduction of, This is for the diſciples, and This for all mankind. How then ſhall we diſtinguiſh them apart, unleſs by an attention to human nature, diſcovering to us what is ſuitable to it, and what is expedient only for particular occaſions?

Nor do we ſcruple to alter the primitive inſtitutions and practices without other warrant than the neceſſity and reaſonableneſs of the alteration: Chriſt ſent forth his preachers with nothing more than a ſtaff in their hands, and commanded them, into whatſoever houſe they ſhould enter, to be content with what was ſet before them, and after his departure his Apoſtles maintained themſelves by the work of their hands,

hands, or the voluntary contributions of the faithful: whereas our Clergy have revenues, honours and power, eſtabliſhed for them by law, which they would find much harder to defend by the written text, without wreſting it violently, than by the expediency of thoſe proviſions for the encouragement of learning, and preſervation of order and Religion among us. So that if they have a divine right to their poſſeſſions, they muſt derive it through the channels of human nature and good policy, flowing from ſprings of divine original: and this regulation ought rather to be eſteemed a foreign ſcyon engrafted from the law of reaſon, than a natural ſhoot from the given law.

Nor do the laity ſtand in a different caſe from the clergy, the landholder having no better goſpel-right to his nine parts, than the parſon has to his tithe: for what is more frequently and ſtrongly inculcated by Chriſt himſelf than a community of goods? how often are we exhorted, as the firſt preliminary to entering the kingdom of heaven, to ſell all we have and give to the poor? by whom muſt be meant the community, becauſe if this precept were univerſally practiſed, we muſt all become poor, and all be benefited by the produce ariſing from every ſale. Nevertheleſs this reiterated command obeyed for a little while, was quickly broken through, and has long ſince been totally diſregarded: Chriſtians now a days poſſeſs and defend, and

and if they can, encreaſe their ſeveral properties without ſcruple, yet without pretending the authority of any text to exempt themſelves, or to declare the precept temporary or local; without other warrant than from common ſenſe and experience of human nature, which manifeſts to every apprehenſion the impracticability of ſuch a ſcheme, and ſhews its certain tendency to introduce diſorder, confuſion and ſcarcity, to diſcourage induſtry, prudence, and commerce, and deſtroy that ſubordination neceſſary to good government. One may preſume this impracticable injunction was laid on purpoſe to make us ſee the allowableneſs and neceſſity of conſulting our own judgement, and even ſuffering it ſometimes to carry us directly counter to the written word: yet without infringing its authority, or proving the command unnatural, wherever nature can be found in that perfection whereto the Goſpel was deſigned to reſtore it.

For a community of goods is no ſuch extravagant notion, but that we can find the convenience and pleaſure of it in little friendly ſocieties for a few hours or a few days continuance. When the company ſit down to an entertainment, they have not their ſeveral meſſes in private property, but all lies in common before them; each man calls for what he likes, he carves the meats, and helps the reſt in the manner he thinks will be moſt agreeable. If a number of well behaved and mutually well diſ-

poſed

poſed perſons ſet out upon a tour of diverſion, perhaps they put their money into one common bag: every one orders what is proper for the company, or what he wants for his own occaſions, but not more than he has occaſion for; one takes care of the carriages, another looks after the proviſions, another manages the remittances, all in their ſeveral ways beſtir themſelves to make things agreeable to the whole, without grudging their trouble.

Now did that glowing brotherly love, that unaſpiring humility, that ſoon contented moderation, that contempt of pain and labour, that unwearied diligence, that unabating activity, that ſerenity and chearfulneſs of temper, which are characteriſtics of a perfect diſciple, prevail among a people, it is eaſy to imagine they might ſit down to the table of nature, or travel the journey of life, which would then become indeed a tour of diverſion or rather happineſs, more eaſily and pleaſurably with a community of goods, than with any diviſion of property whatever. But we Chriſtians of the preſent times are not ſo happily circumſtanced: we have a rapaciouſneſs, an engroſſing greedineſs, a deſire of ſuperiority, an inſenſibility to the wants of others, an invincible ſelfiſhneſs, a diſcontented fretful temper, an averſeneſs to trouble, a dread of labour, a torpid indolence never to be rouzed unleſs by the neceſſity of our ſtation, or allurement of avarice and ambition,

ambition, or at beſt an induſtry miſplaced upon trifles, or the difficult gratification of ſome fond humour. Who then cannot ſee with half an eye that his knowledge of the world, as at preſent characterized, may lawfully ſuperſede the obligation of a rule that would be excellent for a nation of thorough Chriſtians?

But leaſt we ſhould think unworthily of our Lawgiver's wiſdom, becauſe we find by the event that his Code has not yet produced its full effect upon mankind, let us recollect that he has given the promiſe of a Comforter to come, who ſhould bring all things to our remembrance, and inſtruct us in the underſtanding of all things neceſſary for our good: which promiſe had been needleſs, had he given his firſt inſtructions in ſuch fulneſs and clearneſs as to ſuffice for their purpoſe without further explanation. But how is this Comforter to come? Do we expect him to make a ſolemn entry among us, or deſcend in a viſible ſhape like a dove? We have no ground to look for any other expreſs meſſenger from heaven ſince the Meſſiah, who was to cloſe up the great tranſaction between God and man.

The very nature of the errand ſeems to require the Comforter ſhould have begun his progreſs already purſuing it by ſlow and imperceptible advances: his influence was felt

by the Apoſtles and others in the primitive times, and ſince no good thing can be done without him, we may conclude from that degree of piety and ſound knowledge which has never been wholly loſt out of the world, that the like influence has continued all along to our days: yet we cannot reckon him fully come until we ſhall ſee the promiſed effects of his arrival among mankind, in their perfect underſtanding of moral and natural, as well as revealed Religion. In the mean while he works upon us inviſibly and ſecretly, like the wind which bloweth where it liſteth, we hear the ſound thereof, but know not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth: for he preſents no new objects, but clears our optics to diſcern thoſe we have already, nor as I obſerved before, does any thing himſelf, but co-operates with our endeavours firſt begun. Therefore it behoves us to uſe all our faculties, and all means of information from whenceſoever we can draw them, as well from the works, as the word of God; comparing them together with the beſt exerciſe of our judgement, as the moſt likely method to put ourſelves in a way of obtaining his aſſiſtance.

5. I ſhall next paſs over to the other camp, where I muſt take up principles directly oppoſite to thoſe I proceeded upon before: for when one goes upon the errand of peace making, one muſt not contradict nor thwart,

but ſay the things that will pleaſe. Therefore I muſt now look upon Revelation as incredible, and that what has been palmed upon the world for ſuch, was either the inventions of crafty politicians, or the deluſions of enthuſiaſts. For it is neceſſary to aſſign the latter a joint ſhare in the performance, becauſe the propagators of the new ſyſtem were a ſet of ſuch ſimple illiterate ignorant creatures, appearing to have followed the preſent impulſe in all they did, that it is impoſſible to imagine them guilty of any deep laid ſcheme or fine-ſpun artifice, nor can we carry our ſuſpicion of craft any further than during the Jewiſh diſpenſation.

In this apprehenſion of things we may obſerve by how many gradual advances, by what a long and complicated tiſſue of various cauſes the Religion of mankind was brought into its preſent form: the riſe of a people from one ſtock, their ſingular averſeneſs to intermingle among other nations, the original foundation, and ſubſequent changes of their government, their family attachment, the occurencies befalling them, their proſperities and diſtreſſes, the craft of politicians, the exigencies of ſtate, the circumſtances of ſituation, the deluſion of enthuſiaſts, the credulity of a mob, the haſty zeal and paſſions of ignorant perſons, all concurred in the great work. Now unleſs we allow chance an equal ſhare in the adminiſtration of affairs throughout the world, we muſt needs aſcribe this

this extraordinary concatenation of cauſes to the hand of God, in the ſame ſenſe as we would any other producing an important event. For how much ſoever we may eſteem it beneath his Majeſty to concern himſelf with little matters, this is of too extenſive an influence to imagine it paſſing without his regard. The nations of Europe are now moſtly chriſtian, and when we conſider that Mahometiſm is an excreſcence, or corruption of Chriſtianity, perhaps as well deſerving the name, as ſome ſyſtems that ſtill retain it, we muſt allow that either in its purity or its corruptions, it has ſpread over the whole civilized world: beſides that we know not what opinions may have been adopted from thence by the few nations ſtill remaining heathen. Shall we then admit that God cares for what affects the condition of empires and cities, but refuſe him cogniſance of that which has operated upon all mankind?

But it may be alledged there is a diſtinction to be taken between things appointed and permitted, that deluſion and ſuperſtition being evils ought to be ranked among the latter, which we cannot without prophaneneſs imagine to be God's doing, though we know they could not have happened without his knowledge and acquieſcence. Suppoſe them then evils, yet we know that God permitteth none unleſs in order to bring forth greater good therefrom: and though the permiſſion of evil be a divine pre-

rogative which we muſt not preſume to imitate, yet where we cannot remedy the evil, it becomes us to examine its nature and tendency, to ſtudy what good was deſigned to be produced thereby, what profit it may be turned to, and lend our helping hand to promote the work of God.

But why muſt we need ſuppoſe Religion to be an evil, or to have thrown mankind into a worſe condition than they had ſtood in without it. Are the Chickaſaws, the Twigtwees and the Hottentots, which are reported to have none, more humane, more enlightened, better policied, or provided with the conveniencies of life, than thoſe nations who have ſome kind of worſhip among them? The beſt lawgivers have found it neceſſary to inculcate the awe of an inviſible Power, as ſerviceable to put a check upon mens conduct in matters that cannot fall under cogniſance of the magiſtrate: wherefore as the worſt government is better than none, the reign of Nero or Domitian preferable to anarchy, ſo the worſhip of a ſtock or a ſtone is better than no worſhip at all. But it will ſcarce be denied that Mahometiſm ſurpaſſes the worſhip of idols, or that the doctrines prevailing in our own country are more rational than Mahometiſm: why then ſhould we ſcruple to rank them among the providential events deſcribed in the laſt Chapter, or eſteem the methods whereby they were introduced

duced to have been of divine appointment, as marked out among the courſes of nature and fortune, in the original plan?

If we perſuade ourſelves that natural reaſon might ſerve us better, in God's name let us try the ſtrength of it; for I am no more for diſcarding reaſon than any other means of information in my power: but am not aſhamed to learn of any body, even though I were ſure he knew leſs than myſelf; for ſtill he may know ſomething I do not know, or did not think of, or may ſuggeſt a hint I may improve to advantage. But reaſon has been tried, and though carrying ſome few men of cool judgement, and great leiſure, conſiderable lengths, has been found inſufficient to conduct the buſy world, nor compleatly ſufficient even for the ſtudious: for there have been as many ſchiſms and hereſies in philoſophy as religion, the one leading into as dangerous errors, as the other.

Neither could philoſophy grow to maturity without the ſeed ſown by the nurſe and the prieſt, for how much ſoever we may become afterwards wiſer than our teachers, the moſt profound ſpeculatiſt can ſcarce imagine he ſhould have run the ſame lengths of refinement, had he been bred up among the Hottentots: but it is the ſolicitude for futurity, the perſuaſion of an inviſible nature, the importance of diſtinguiſhing between right and wrong, inculcated into us from our childhood, that puts us upon our enquiries and

the exertion of our faculties. Therefore without ſhutting our eyes either againſt reaſon or popular opinion, we may employ them uſefully to aſſiſt and correct one another: if not becauſe needful in private prudence, at leaſt to render us better capable of doing benefit to others.

6. The intereſts of the learned and vulgar are blended together, for we live by ſociety, and our ſcience, as well as our conveniencies of life, however worked up by ourſelves, are made out of materials prepared for us by other hands. What though the Sophiſts of Greece claimed an all-ſufficiency of knowledge, becauſe they made the cloak upon their back and ring upon their fingers? yet I ſuppoſe the cloth was ſpun, and the gold refined from the ore by the ignorant and illiterate, and according as they performed their work, the cloak and the ring would be more or leſs fine and durable. In like manner whatever ſyſtems we may ſtrike out for ourſelves, ſtill the rudiments we ſet out upon, the application and turn of mind we proceed with, were derived to us by education, example, and ſympathy. And if we be ſo lucky as to reach the limits of ſound philoſophy we ſhall ſee plainly by the light of that country, that the treaſures found there are not to be locked up for private uſe, but rendered as univerſally beneficial as poſſible by ſuch ways as are feaſible.

Therefore

Therefore it is incumbent upon us to regard popular opinions and cuſtoms, for by them we may beſt ſerve the general uſes: were we aſſuredly wiſer than convocations and ſynods we could not open the ſources of our wiſdom to the world, we could only deal out the ſtreams in ſalutary precepts exhorting them to a reverence of the divine Majeſty, dependence on his Providence, honeſty in their dealings, and induſtry in their callings, which they muſt take upon the credit of our authority; but what authority can we expect with thoſe who are no judges of our extraordinary merit? Therefore how fortunate or rather providential is it, that the ſame things are recommended by the doctors of the Church? and how imprudent would it be to weaken their authority, which is the ſole engine we have wherewith to work our honeſt purpoſes? For the end crowns the work, and in many caſes the intention will ſanctify the deed: it is a great matter if we can compaſs what is right, though we ſhould not be able to explain the why, but employ any why that will beſt go down with the people.

As much as we may laugh at grandmother Eve and her apple, or the romantic perfection of Paradiſe, certain it is that human nature and human underſtanding are now far from being perfect; and though it ſhould not be owing to that curſed pippin having ſpoiled our conſtitution, we are manifeſtly a weakly diſtempered

race of mortals, who muſt be managed with art and medicine to make our natural aliment digeſt. We have no experience of doing any thing unleſs by immediate application of our bodily powers thereto, or by ſetting other perſons at work whom we can command, nor of giving information otherwiſe than by the words of our mouth: ſo the generality conceive of God as performing his works by direct exertions of omnipotence, or the miniſtry of his angels, or declaring his mind by ſecret influences or revelations. Nor is it neceſſary they muſt be ſuperſtitious herein, for ſuperſtition is relative, that which would be ſuch in one man being none in another, according to the extent of their comprehenſion.

Philoſophy ſhews the reaſon of aſcribing ſome events, ſome rules of action and ſome truths to divine original; but philoſophy cannot explain to common capacity the long chain of ſecond cauſes lying between the firſt operation and viſible phenomena: therefore it is no encouragement of ſuperſtition to ſhorten the line for each man to a length that will juſt lie upon the ſcale of his imagination, nor does ſuperſtition begin, until you cut off a part of the line that his ſcale might have borne. The neceſſities of life demand our attention among ſenſible objects to provide for them; reaſon directs to apply a part of our thoughts to our ſpiritual concerns: ſome few may be led by inclination or habit to em-

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ploy the due proportion this way occaſionally, but it is eaſy to gueſs this dictate of reaſon would be generally neglected without certain ſtated times appropriated to the performance of it. Perhaps the philoſopher might think one day in ten enough, or one in five but juſt enough, or he would certainly ſee that Wedneſday might do as well as Sunday, but if it would not do better, why ſhould he wiſh to put men out of their way? or who would mind the philoſopher ſo far, as to throw aſide his common buſineſs every Wedneſday to pleaſe him? Nor need he diſturb himſelf at the reaſons given for obſervance of one day in ſeven, becauſe God reſted from his works, or the Reſurrection happened on ſuch a particular day: for theſe are good reaſons if they be ſuch as will weigh. And if there be ſome ſo groſs and narrow-minded as to imagine an intrinſic ſacredneſs in the day, yet if they are likewiſe of ſuch an indolent dilatory diſpoſition as never to do what may be done as well another time as now, it would do hurt to undeceive them.

The like may be ſaid of other cuſtoms eſteemed ſacred; if not valuable in themſelves, they may lead into practices and ſentiments which it might be impoſſible to make manifeſt to every eye: ſo that men, while following a ſhadow caſt by ſkilful honeſt hands, may be enabled to catch a ſolid ſubſtance they know nothing of, nor would be perſuaded to lay hold on.

on. There is this advantage in all diſcipline, even though practiſed in trifles, that it inures men to order and rule, and to reſiſt a preſent fancy, and renders them more ſuſceptible of benefit from the knowledge of what is right, whenever they can attain it. Therefore if we conſider Religion only as the ſcaffolding of reaſon, it is well worth our attention; for whether human nature in its preſent condition be an unfiniſhed building, or the ruins of an ancient ſtructure, it requires the ſame treatment in either caſe: let us then examine carefully whatever remains of the foundation, and uſe what helps we can to erect any thing ſolid thereupon; when the edifice ſhall be compleated, it may ſerve for all our uſes, but any one that contemplates the preſent ſtate of it, may ſee that it is much too early to ſtrike the ſcaffolding yet.

7. But it is ſuggeſted, that many doctrines are propagated among the vulgar contrary to reaſon and ſubverſive of morality, contrived by deſigning perſons ſolely for their own profit and aggrandizement. What then? may not we pick out the corn from the chaff? and is it not worth while to ſift them carefully that we may know how to diſtinguiſh them; rather than caſt away both out of wantonneſs or lazineſs? If we find any thing manifeſtly ſuperſtitious, we ſhall do well to oppoſe or qualify it by a rational conſtruction, always taking with us the caution

caution given in the laſt ſection, to remember that ſuperſtition is relative, for elſe we may chance to do miſchief by our indiſcretion. And if ſome crafty perſons have impoſed upon mankind, why ſhould we not endeavour to turn their cannon againſt them by drawing a better concluſion from the premiſes whereon they build thoſe doctrines? for they will not avow their ſelfiſhneſs; whatever their real intention be, they profeſs to labour in the redemption from ſin and wickedneſs: let us then take them at their word, and ſtudy to do ſincerely what they profeſs: whatever we can clearly ſhow to have a contrary tendency we may ſafely reject, they dare not contradict us if they would.

The fund from whence they pretend to draw all their ſupplies, runs in ſuch figurative expreſſions as are ſuſceptible of different colours; experience ſhews how many pernicious and contrary interpretations have been given to the ſame texts, and the like experience ſhews what rational doctrines and rules of conduct have been ſupported upon them: therefore without troubling our heads about the deſign wherewith any thing was written or taught, let us ſtrive to turn every thing in a manner that may prove advantageous to the intereſts of ſound reaſon and morality. Though Religion were no more than an artifice to enſlave reaſon and ſerve private ends under pretence of public benefit, yet had we the like

like zeal to ſet our wits and induſtry at work in a good cauſe as we ſuppoſe others to have in a bad one, it might not be impoſſible to find honeſt artifices for reſtoring reaſon to her liberty and doing a real benefit to mankind, under an appearance of ſupporting the doctrines eſteemed ſacred.

But why need we judge ſo unfavourably of men, as to pronounce them actuated ſolely by ſelfiſh views in every thing they do redounding to ſome private advantage of their own? Is honeſty of ſo repellent a nature as to render it incapable of ever joining with policy? can we never ſerve our neighbour without ſacrificing our own intereſts? We find moſt characters contain a mixture of good and bad: cunning ſeldom ſo engroſſes the whole man as to leave no room for the moral ſenſes, nor does his partiality for himſelf exclude all love of truth or regard for others. What if Moſes ſet out upon his enterprize with a proſpect of raiſing himſelf to royal power, are all politicians ſuch vile creatures as to care nothing for any body elſe? if the public good comes in competition with their private intereſts we may gueſs which they will purſue: but where not inconſiſtent therewith, what ſhould hinder but they may beſtow a thought upon it? it is moſt natural to imagine they will take it up for a ſecondary aim, becauſe ſerving to raiſe them in eſteem and reputation with the people. Why then might not

not he proceed partly upon a real ſolicitude for the welfare of his nation, giving them ſuch regulations as might produce order, polity, and good manners among them; and even framing his inventions upon obſervation of their character, in ſuch manner as to lead them imperceptibly into ſentiments and practices conducive to their happineſs?

And for the ſpiritual directors of our own times, though we may allow them ſubject to human infirmity, which will unavoidably give a bias to ſelf-intereſt, yet we can hardly believe them all joining in ſupport of a meer politic impoſture, diſcerned in their conſciences to be ſuch. We may know ſome among them of ſerious and even ſcrupulous chara ers, having an abhorrence of injury to truth or their fellow-creatures; and if we muſt lay it down as inconteſtable, that they weigh their external evidences in the ſcale of prejudice which gives a weight to what had none before: this prejudice muſt ariſe in the beſt of them from their opinion of the internal, which it may be preſumed they judge of in the ſame manner as other people judge of other things, by obſervation on the natural tendency of rules, and experience of their effects; wherein they certainly are liable to error, yet ſurely not incapable of ever diſcerning the truth.

Why then ſhould we ſo wrap ourſelves up in the conceit of our own conſummate accompliſhment, as to think there is nothing can be learned from

from another, or to deſpiſe in the lump a whole ſet of regulations eſtabliſhed by the wiſdom of politicians, and approved by well-intentioned perſons of good natural, and improved underſtandings? and not rather give them a thorough examination, for the chance of finding an expedience in ſome of them we were not aware of? For expedience is the thing to be principally regarded; the want of looking for this in meaſures leads both ſides into miſtakes: the weakly righteous finding certain forms recommended by the judicious, and perceiving their good effects where practiſed, conclude them to have an intrinſic value, and if men of profound learning they hunt for ſcholaſtic ſubtilties to ſupport their notion; the weakly rational, diſcerning the fallacy of this intrinſic value, conclude as haſtily there is no value in them at all. Whereas both may be in the wrong, for things inſignificant in themſelves may be productive of a ſolid and ſubſtantial benefit: even error is ſometimes expedient for people who will take a bad reaſon for doing a good thing, when they cannot ſee the force of a good reaſon, provided the error do not draw on miſchiefs greater than the ſervice it does.

8. Nobody can deny that ſchemes of avarice, ambition, and tyranny over the very thoughts, as well as perſons, and properties of men, have been erected upon the baſis of Religion, which is apt to give men a prejudice againſt the root that

that can bear ſuch pernicious fruits. But we ſhould conſider that our antagoniſts may retort the argument upon us, for reaſon too has been found to make wild work in ſome hands, and if it has never done ſuch extenſive miſchief, it was for want of ſtrength to take hold of the populace: therefore if religion, which has by far the greater innate vigour, can be brought to aſſiſt in the purpoſes of reaſon, much more may be done with than without ſuch help.

But it is unfair to take the character of either from their appearance under the diſguiſes wherewith they have been covered: when made ſubſervient to the purpoſe of private paſſions, which it is their proper office to regulate and controul, they become corrupted: in this ſtate they loſe their eſſence, being no longer their real ſelves. The Cynics, the Epicureans and the Pyrrhonians, were much ſuch philoſophers, as the Gnoſtics, the Muggletonians, and the Moravians, were chriſtians; and he that ſhould think to form his judgement of Reaſon or Religion from theſe patterns, would do as wiſely as if he expected to diſcover the alimentary qualities of fruits by analyzing ſuch as were rotten. To have a true idea of things one ought to know the beſt they are capable of, which can never be learned from them in their depravities, nor without examining them in the faireſt lights, and obſerving to what uſes they are applicable.

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Philoſophy may be ſtiled the art of marſhalling the ideas in the underſtanding, and Religion that of diſciplining the imagination. Now it is the perfection, not perverſion, of a method that conſtitutes the art, which title no more belongs to deluſion in the one, than to ſophiſtry in the other; or if theſe muſt be called arts, they are diſtinct arts from that which they profeſs: ſo that we ſhall paſs our judgement never the ſurer upon That, for being acquainted with the miſchiefs of Them. It has been made appear upon ſeveral occaſions in the courſe of this work, that imagination bears as great a ſway in our motions as underſtandings; That muſt execute what This projects, or nothing will be done further than in ſpeculation.

It is well known there are perſons who can give excellent counſel but can never follow it themſelves: theſe people do not want underſtanding, but they want an incitement to practiſe what they know; which is to be gotten by habit and diſcipline, rather than calm argumentation: ſo their knowledge is of leſs benefit to themſelves than to others, the bent of whoſe imagination and deſire is ſtrongly turned upon doing what is right. On the other hand many who cannot diſcover the rectitude of meaſures, may yet be brought to purſue ſuch of whoſe rectitude they are perſuaded: but then this perſuaſion muſt be worked by authority, example, or cuſtom, upon thoſe who are not capable of rational

rational conviction; and the wiſeſt of us ſcarce being able to inveſtigate every thing to the fountain head, it will be ſafeſt to follow cuſtom and authority, in matters wherein we have not a full and clear diſcernment, and conſequently to be wiſhed for our own ſakes that authority and cuſtom may direct the right way.

Wherefore it well deſerves our pains to ſtudy attentively that art whereby deſire, opinion, apprehenſion, and all the family of imagination may be managed, in order to learn from thence how that vigorous faculty may be turned to execute the purpoſes of reaſon, for by bringing them to join forces in the ſame work, we may do good ſervice as well to ourſelves as to our fellow creatures. And if we do not like the method of practiſing this art now taken among us, yet conſidering how hard it is to break through eſtabliſhed cuſtoms and riveted opinions, we may find it more feaſible to work good purpoſes out of them, than to do good by overthrowing them. What though they had been firſt introduced and ſince maintained by deſigning perſons for ſiniſter ends, this would not hinder our trying to make them anſwer better ends than were deſigned.

Yet I do not know why we ſhould confine our thoughts to the machinations of men who are but inſtruments in the hand of Heaven in all they do, turned this way or that by the proviſion of cauſes pre-ordained from above. But

the ſyſtem they have propagated ſpreads too extenſive an influence, as we obſerved before, to doubt of its being among the appointments of providence, which we know frequently employs the follies, the paſſions, the errors, the wickedneſs of men to accompliſh purpoſes they know not of. The ways of Providence are often unaccountable, conducting ſurely to an aim by means ſeeming the moſt unlikely to attain it, and though ſuch means having been uſed, will not juſtify us in joining againſt our judgement with whatever we have in our power to alter, yet where we cannot put things out of their courſe, it would be in vain to kick againſt the pricks; our buſineſs here is to ſubmit, not to reſiſt; to learn, not to judge. For we may preſume that Providence knows the propriety of meaſures ſomewhat better than ourſelves; therefore if we ſet ourſelves to ſtudy diligently the meaſures it takes, their effects and tendencies, it is not impoſſible we may find uſes in things appearing inſignificant and nugatory, expedience in what we thought at firſt pernicious, good fruits growing from roots of an evil quality, and ſalutary proviſions in what we had apprehended to be evils.

9. Having now apologized with both parties for my attempt, I may hope for their candid reception of what I ſhall offer in the proſecution of it, and that they will believe me a well wiſher to both in all matters that do not tend

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to injure the other. As I have profeſſed a ſtrict neutrality, I ſhall not wittingly take part on either ſide, but make it my buſineſs to ſearch for ſuch points as may be agreed to conſiſtently with both their principles; wiſhing I could bring them both to join under one banner, becauſe conceiving more good might be done to mankind by their united efforts, than by their diviſions: but if this be too romantic a ſcheme, at leaſt deſirous to render them leſs odious and contemptible to one another, and leſs negligent of what hurt they may do among by-ſtanders by their ſcuffles.

I have worked hitherto ſolely upon the fund of natural reaſon, labouring the beſt I could to make my building ſolid and coherent in its parts. I have quoted authority as occaſion offered, not ſo much in ſupport of my edifice, as with a view to my preſent deſign of ſhewing a ſimilitude of ſtructure therewith. I proceed now to examine the opinions commonly taught among us by the lights I have already gathered, in order to diſcover what they contain conformable with the productions of human reaſon, and bring both to co-incide ſo far as they will bear: eſteeming that the trueſt interpretation of a doctrine, which appears moſt conſonant to reaſon, and that the ſureſt deciſion of reaſon which ſtands confirmed by the doctrines received. In doing this, one muſt manage with calmneſs and caution, not wreſting either of

them violently to ſerve the purpoſes of the other, as your zealots of all kinds too commonly do, but bending them gently as one would a tender twig, ſo as not to bruiſe, nor injure, nor rend it from the parent plant.

The incorporation ſeems likelieſt to ſucceed by following that method the gardeners call grafting by approximation, wherein the branches of two ſtems planted near each other, are brought gradually to approach until they touch: they then are bound cloſe under one ligature, in order to make them grow together; but this they will not do, unleſs ſome of the bark and rind of both be pared off, and their ſides flatted and ſmoothed, ſo that the ſap veſſels may open into one another, the vital juices mingle, and the circulation mutually communicate between them. When found to have thoroughly co-aleſced, one is cut off below, and the other above the juncture, whereby the remaining ſhoot will become a branch of the other tree: and this may be done upon either of them at pleaſure, according to the gardener's own wants or the demands of his cuſtomers.

If ſomething of the like proceſs were tried upon Philoſophy and Religion, I apprehend they might both receive conſiderable improvement: for by piercing through the outward forms and idioms into the ſap and ſpirit, which might mutually aſſimilate by degrees, the coolneſs

neſs of the one would temper the warmth of the other, and in return derive a fructifying vigour therefrom, to the great advantage of both. For Reaſon is a very indifferent bearer, its juices viſcid, and its circulation ſlow, producing leaves, and bloſſoms, and knotty excreſcencies copiouſly enough, but ſeldom bringing any ſerviceable fruit to maturity without great advantages of ſoil, painful cultivation, and continual tendency. Whereas Religion is a prodigious bearer, oftener redundant than barren in the pooreſt grounds: but the ſtrong tone of its veſſels and its precipitant circulation drive on the juices before well digeſted, and are apt to throw crudities into the fruit, which will like ſome pears, frequently contain more of woody concretion than wholeſome pulp.

As to the choice of either to be ſaved for the ſtem or the ſtock, this may be left to diſcretion: the ſtudious man will probably graft Religion upon Philoſophy for his own uſe, but the contrary for the generality. In both caſes, provided he employ healthy ſtocks of the genuine kind, uncankered with prejudice or peculiarity, and the inoculation be ſkilfully performed, the fruits will be the ſame in ſubſtance, only differing a little in cólour and flavour, and perhaps the leaves and twigs differently ſhaped and ſet on: ſo that however appearing two diſtinct ſpecies to the common beholder, they will have the ſame nutritive effect upon the

conſtitution of the uſer. And for our better encouragement to endeavour the aſſociation we may remark that the ends propoſed by both to our attainment are ſimilar.

Philoſophy leads us by the contemplation of nature to diſcover the power and goodneſs of God, whoſe views never terminate upon evil, whoſe univerſal Providence connects all his perceptive creatures in one common intereſt: whence we are to regard ourſelves as citizens of the world, promoting its benefit in that little part of it wherewith we have intercourſe, and encreaſing the quantity of happineſs in any ſubject wherever we can. Chriſtianity inſtructs us to do all things for the glory of God, to reſt our dependence upon him, to behold him in the amiable light of an indulgent father ordering all things for our good, to conſider ourſelves as members of Chriſt, which is but another phraſe to expreſs citizens of the world, he being the firſt-born and head of every creature, who are his members, and fellow members of one another; to love our neighbour as ourſelves, nor to ſtop there, but pray for them that deſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us, to feed our enemy if he hunger, and if he thirſt to give him drink. One recommends prudence and benevolence as the two pillars whereon to erect our rules of conduct: the other adviſes to be wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves. One warns us to beware of appetite and paſſion, nor ever ſuffer

ſuffer them to uſurp upon the authority of reaſon: the other exhorts to ſubdue our fleſhly luſts, and bring the carnal man under ſubjection to the ſpiritual. One deſcribes the paſſage through matter as a ſhort excurſion leading to our natural reſidence in the ſociety of pure ſpirits: the other calls life a journey through the vale of mortality, and heaven our proper home. In ſhort the true drift of both is none other than the advancement of happineſs among men as well in body as mind: and whatever in either leads aſide from that aim, or conduces nothing towards it, may be pronounced ſpurious or erroneous.

10. Nevertheleſs it muſt be confeſſed, that Religion contains many things having no immediate relation thereto: it lays great ſtreſs upon forms, ceremonies, and ſtrength of perſuaſion; it ſeems to enjoin arbitrary precepts, to inculcate the neceſſity of doctrines meerly ſpeculative, to demand aſſent without conviction or even comprehenſion of the truths aſſented to; it takes a compaſs to attain its end, turning our backs againſt reaſon in ſome parts of the way; it leads the votary along darkſome paſſages, where he muſt follow implicitly becauſe bidden, without knowing why, or whither going; it ſpeaks in figurative expreſſions, and gives enigmatical commands, which muſt be underſtood with full confidence of having

attained the right interpretation, at the hazard of all our hopes and all our happineſs.

We are told the letter killeth, but the ſpirit maketh alive: but how have doctors differed, and damned one another for their adherence to the expreſs words, or the latent meaning! And even in the Parts remaining undiſputed, it is often difficult to diſcern which is form, and which is ſubſtance directly operating to ſalvation, or remotely neceſſary to lead into the way of it. So that it may be compared to a Walnut, divided into ſuch multiform quarters as require great nicety to peel without hurting the nut: if you go to pare it with a knife as you would an apple, you will take off part of the kernel, and leave part of the ſkin. Nay, conſidering the great difference of conſtitutions, and how many there are that cannot digeſt the kernel without the ſkin, nor will ſwallow the latter unleſs you perſuade them it is kernel, it may be almoſt impoſſible to manage ſo dexterouſly as neither to do real hurt to the weak, nor diſguſt the ſtrong.

Theſe conſiderations may warn us ſufficiently what ſlippery ground we are going to enter upon, where we muſt not tread with fear and trembling nor yet with raſhneſs; but endeavour to maintain an unruffled courage well compatible with vigilant caution, though not with terror and trepidation. He that is obliged to walk upon the edge

edge of a precipice muſt overcome his fears, or they will certainly throw him down; or if he ſuffer his thoughts to fall off their guard for a moment, the danger will be as great. Therefore we ſhall reſolve to proceed with a circumſpect, unbiaſſed freedom, ſolicitous not to give offence, more ſolicitous to do no real damage any where, but unſolicitous of that favour which ariſes from partiality to the prejudices of others. But ſince freedom has been ſo groſsly miſunderſtood as to be taken by ſome for perverſeneſs and obſtinacy, and placed by others of confined views and narrow prejudices, in a bold oppoſition againſt whatever they do not like, it will be expedient to know ſomething of its genuine nature, before we venture upon the exerciſe of it: and becauſe it is of no ſmall avail towards keeping us in the right way, to obſerve the turnings on either hand that lead aſtray from it, we ſhall beſtow ſome time upon examination of the principal hinderances, that ordinarily obſtruct the courſe of a true freedom of enquiry and judgement.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Freedom of Thought.

EDUCATION, example, and cuſtom, are the firſt channels of knowledge and accompliſhment; it is theſe make the difference between the civilized and the ſavage: for neither reaſon nor hiſtory leave room to imagine a particular virtue in climates, inſpiring judgement and ſcience into the inhabitants born therein with the air they breathe, nor that there are not thoſe in the moſt barbarous countries, who ſtrike out as large improvements as can be made by a ſingle perſon unaided by his neighbours. But ſingle perſons can make very little advances of themſelves, nor does the difference between one people and another ariſe from any other cauſe, than the mutual communication of lights among them. The experience of thoſe who have gone before us, conveyed by inſtruction, ſhortens our road to knowledge, and by lifting us over a conſiderable part of the way, leaves us in freſh vigour and ſpirits to purſue the reſt, or run further lengths beyond. For at our entrance into life every thing is new, every thing unknown, ſo there is no ground whereon to build a rational conviction, nor other reaſon to be had for aſſenting to any thing,

thing, than becauſe we were taught it. And the like may be ſaid of any particular art or ſcience, wherein docility is the firſt requiſite enabling us to make a proficiency: for judgement comes from experience, and experience is only gotten by practice; but the ways of practice neceſſary for gaining experience muſt be ſuggeſted to us, and entered upon without any knowledge of their expedience, unleſs what we learn from inſtruction.

But the pleaſures, the paſſions, and the levity of youth, perpetually drawing off their attention, render it neceſſary to raiſe up contrary paſſions for keeping them obſervant, as likewiſe for preventing their being bewildered by the many oppoſite documents abroad in the world: ſo they are plied with topics of fear and ſhame, to make them perſevere in the truth they have been put into, the peculiar excellence of it is continually chimed in their ears, and great cautions urged to beware of ſeducers that would lead them aſtray. And after having followed their guides ſome time, the eaſe of acting and thinking in a particular track gives them an habitual liking thereto, and caſts a ſtrangeneſs and uncouthneſs upon every thing not exactly conformable therewith. Hence we very commonly find, that proficients in all ſciences, profeſſions, and ways of life, conceive a prodigious opinion of the trains of thought and courſes of practice whereto they have been accuſtomed, with a ſovereign

contempt

contempt of all others in compariſon with their own.

This prejudice ariſing from education, or where that has been neglected, from ſome teacher or company happening to gain an aſcendant over the mind, is excuſable in the vulgar of all ranks, who have no rules nor ſentiments, but what were inculcated into them, and are no hinderance to their freedom of thought which they are not capable of exerciſing; for where there is no power, there is no room either for liberty or reſtraint. But wanting either leiſure or capacity to penetrate below the ſurface, they dwell upon externals, or catch at ſome favourite word, ſuch as church, or faith, or grace, or liberty, or reaſon, or nature, or rectitude, the proper import of which they do not underſtand: and if they puſh their zeal to extravagancies, it is more the fault of their leaders than their own, for they would each follow his own way without diſturbing one another, where their own paſſions and intereſts are not immediately concerned, if not inſtigated by perſons who have private ends to ſerve, or whimſical humours to gratify upon them. Therefore the ſources of narrow-mindedneſs, conſidered as a fault of the Will and not a natural imbecillity, muſt be ſought for among ſuch, as were enabled by nature and their ſituation to have enlarged their underſtanding beyond the knowledge infuſed into them by example

For inſtruction will not do every thing alone; it can neither be given ſo fully as to reach every particular caſe of conduct that may happen, nor ſo clearly as to leave no hazard of being ever miſunderſtood: beſides that, change of circumſtances and new ſcenes of life occuring will require other rules than thoſe we have been provided with, and the beſt of teachers being fallible, will unavoidably mingle ſomething of error and human imperfection in their ſyſtem. Therefore he that has eyes to ſee, as well as ears to hear, muſt ſee for himſelf, as well as liſten to what is told him, and employ his private judgement to underſtand, to apply, to enlarge, or to correct the learning he has received from education, example, or cuſtom.

But this exerciſe of private judgement is a very difficult taſk to manage, and its deciſions liable to the ſame inconveniences, as thoſe made for us by other people: for it being impoſſible in any ſcience, even in the mathematics, to carry the whole proceſs in our heads whereby we arrived at any truth, we muſt reſt upon the character of aſſurance we find it bear in our imagination; by which means our own predeterminations come to operate upon us in the ſame manner with the notions we were bred up in, that is, by their authority. But this authority wants the farther uſe of judgement to reſcue us from oppreſſion under it, full as as the other: for judgement ripens by experience,

experience, which we acquire gradually, nor is it uncommon for ſubſequent experience to give us a very different notion of things from that left upon us by a former. Nor is it always eaſy to diſtinguiſh between what we had diſcovered ourſelves, and what we have imbibed from our teachers, or catched by ſympathy from the company we have conſorted with; for often forgetting the channels through which our perſuaſions were derived to us, we regard them as ſelf-evident principles, manifeſted by a kind of intuitive evidence: whence come the notions of innate ideas, of eſſential and eternal truths, of inherent rectitude, beauty and laudableneſs of actions good in themſelves, and the like; which are ſuppoſed immediate objects of an internal ſenſe, diſcovering them by a ſagacity of diſcernment, not by inveſtigations of reaſon, whoſe buſineſs it is rather to defend and enforce, than to weigh or examine them.

The high veneration commonly inculcated for the ways and principles men have been brought up in, becomes transferred to the internal ſenſe as ſoon as they conceive it opening, that is, as ſoon as it ſeems to diſtinguiſh the character of truth, or expedience independent on the teacher's authority; eſpecially if it diſcovers errors and imperfections in the things they have been taught, for then it appears more venerable than that they were habituated

to

to venerate. This veneration for their ſagacity of diſcernment, and the predeterminations fixed thereby, not unfrequently grows into a ſtrong paſſion which caſts ſhackles upon the thought: for innocent miſtake or ignorance may proceed from other cauſes, but it is always ſome ſecret paſſion that infringes upon our liberty, forcing us into a train of thought conformable to its intereſts, and reſtraining us from looking upon whatever ſeems to endanger them. It would be endleſs to hunt after all the extravagancies this paſſion leads into, but when it happens to take the road of Religion, it divides into two principal branches: one upon confidence of knowing the road better and running greater lengths in it than any body elſe, and this ends in Bigotry; the other of having found the beaten road hollow, as running along fairy ground, with a reſolution of ſteering as wide from it as poſſible, and this draws off into what is uſually called Freethinking.

2. But how far aſunder ſoever theſe two branches may point, one may obſerve a reſemblance in the manner of laying them out, and a mixture of each others character in the projectors. For the bigot is a freethinker with reſpect to the doctors of his Church, delighting to cenſure their expoſitions and practices, as deviations from the primitive purity: and the freethinker is a bigot to certain favourite principles, the infallibility of his reaſon, the ſelf-evidences

evidences of abſtracted truths, the abſurdity of divine interpoſitions, and the touchſtone of ridicule, nor will hear a word that ſhould be ſpoken of them diſreſpectfully.

Both are alike preſumptuous, arrogant, ſelf-ſufficient, indiſſolubly wedded to their own peculiar notions, confiding in their ſagacity of diſcerning truths intuitively; judging of their merit by compariſon, and therefore looking upon the reſt of mortals with a contemptuous pity, thereby to heighten their own ſuperiority over them; impatient of contradiction, ſcorning to learn as implying imperfection, but aiming to draw all others after them; ambitious of ſhining everywhere, and appearing perſons of conſequence, diſdainful of common atchievements, but puſhing always at extraordinary lengths.

The views of both lie confined within a ſcanty compaſs, for they care little to obſerve human nature, to ſtudy the paſſions and affections, their proper balance, their uſes and abuſes, to conſult the general convenience, to ſuit their doctrines to the capacities, and the various ſtations of life wherein men are engaged; but frame their ſyſtem, both of opinion and conduct, agreeably to their own ſituation and uſages, and then expect that every body ſhould conform ſtrictly to their plan. They make mighty pretence of zeal for the public good, but then it extends only to ſuch of the public as chime

chime in with their ſchemes; for all the reſt they deteſt or deſpiſe.

Both entertain narrow conceptions of the ſupreme Being, taking their idea of him from human affections, and human underſtanding, and confidently perſuading themſelves that their picture is an exact copy of the original: thus depreſſing him to their own level as a ſhorter way than ſtriving to imitate his perfections, and depreciating their fellow-creatures until they conceit themſelves raiſed far above the midway between them and their Creator. Both agree to place the whole ſum and ſubſtance of Religion in forms and creeds; which the one therefore regards as the ſole thing eſſential, in contempt of practical ſentiments and the common duties of their ſtation; while the other, finding no eſſential value in them, concludes unfavourably of Religion itſelf, as containing nothing ſolid or uſeful.

3. The bigot has been carefully trained up, or terrified by the rantings of ſome gifted preacher into a ſerious and induſtrious temper; he plies cloſe to his leſſons, and gains applauſe for his diligence and proficiency; he hears grievous lamentations at the univerſal depravity and blindneſs of mankind, is perpetually taught the doctrine of the ſtrait gate, and put in mind how happy it is that he has the means and diſpoſition of mind afforded for

entering it. He looks upon it as his indiſpenſible duty to attain a higher degree of perfection than ever yet was attained, at leaſt ſince the primitive times; he affects to talk meanly of himſelf, as unable to do or think any thing that is good, but that God will give his abundant grace to ſuch as call upon him earneſtly. He ſighs and groans at the infatuation of mankind, as giving a real grief and vexation to the holy ſpirit, whoſe fondneſs thereby becomes more ſtrongly attached to thoſe very few that ſeek him, and he is ſure none ſeek more earneſtly than himſelf: ſo of courſe he muſt be the prime favourite of heaven, to whom he is become neceſſary, becauſe without him there would be no true worſhip in the world.

He ſhows a ſtrong propenſity to work miracles, but the inquiſitiveneſs of the times not permitting, he deals largely in ſecret whiſpers, private illuminations and inward feelings, wherein nobody can contradict him. Providence ſeems to have nothing elſe to do than to tend his minute motions, and every little turn of chance reſpecting him, is an interpoſition of heaven. He thinks himſelf humble, but ſees none comparable to himſelf in that only valuable quality, a zeal for the divine glory: if he has any ſincere wiſhes for the good of others, they are overwhelmed by the joy of gathering a multitude of followers, whom he ſtrives to chide and affright into his train, rather than to invite

invite and perſuade: for he does all in eagerneſs and anger, and whoever proves refractory he cenſures, and damns moſt unmercifully. He penetrates into the ſecret counſels of heaven, ſees minutely its ways of proceeding, what is a mercy, and what a judgement: for having the ſpirit of the Lord he muſt know the mind of the Lord, and be the ſure interpreter of his word, which to the carnal-minded, that is, to all other perſons, appears in ſuch manner as that ſeeing they do not ſee, and hearing they do not underſtand.

He ſearches the Scriptures daily, for he talks ſcarce any other language, hunts perpetually for texts to ſupport his particular perſuaſions, turns the moſt foreign ſo as to make them ſerve his purpoſe, introduces them by head and ſhoulders upon the moſt trifling occaſions, and this he calls ſearching. He finds them inculcate ſtrongly the duties of prayer, of abſtinence, of almſgiving, of devout exerciſes together with a good life: ſo he pronounces a good life to conſiſt wholly in them, and that crying inceſſantly, Lord, Lord, is doing the Will of our Father which is in heaven. He would have every body hunt lectures from morning to night, or ſing pſalms every third hour, or continually ejaculate at their work, or mingle prayers among their diverſions, ſtarve themſelves both in food and cloathing, but give him all their money to diſpoſe of in pious uſes and

purchaſe himſelf more followers and more adoration, He ſcorns to ſtudy human nature, for nature is utterly corrupted by the fall, and we are to act as contrary to it as poſſible, living in the world as though we were not in the world.

He wants calmneſs enough to obſerve that a crooked ſtick muſt be bent the contrary way juſt ſo much beyond the line, as you expect it will recoil after taking off your hand; ſo a prudent teacher will enjoin a greater ſtrictneſs than he wiſhes ſhould be adhered to, allowing for the recoil of natural appetites, old deſires and habits: but he keeps bending on with all his might, until by continual preſſure he brings the ſtick to remain in the oppoſite curvature. He moves ſolely by zeal, and is an utter ſtranger to diſcretion; nor ever regards what is feaſible, but what is right in his own theory. He conſiders not that there are many neceſſary profeſſions which require the whole application to fulfil the duties of them, and that men may be pious and uſeful members of ſociety, without being divines: but having nothing elſe to do himſelf, with neither knowledge, genius, nor ability for any other employment, he would perſuade all mankind to follow their reſpective callings only by the by, making divinity their principal ſtudy, becauſe then they muſt all reſort to his oracle, from whence alone they can receive it genuine.

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4. The freethinker perhaps too has imbibed his principles from the perſons among whom he was bred up; or perhaps has been bred up in no principles at all, but catches at any ſpecious pretences ſuggeſted to cover him from the ſhame of following uncontrouled appetite and humour, which he calls nature; or it may be, has been educated a little too ſtrictly by perſons better verſed in the forms and tenets of Religion than the ends they were calculated to anſwer; but being of a lively volatile temper he digeſts nothing of what is taught him, his leſſons become dry, all appears taſk and burden, and he deſpairs of ever making the proficiency required of him as an indiſpenſible duty. Under this uneaſineſs he meets with ſomebody who in a confident air talks ſlightingly of the diſcipline that has diſturbed him, reflects on his teachers as proceeding more by rote than judgement, finds fault with their documents, and perhaps juſtly in the manner they have been delivered, convinces him that forms and articles have nothing eſſential in them, that if men would do what they know to be right, performing their duties as members of ſociety, they would want nothing elſe, and makes wondrous merry with the dogmaticalneſs of pedants, and the ſuperſtitions currently eſteemed ſacred among the vulgar.

Theſe comfortable diſcourſes, addreſſed both in the argumentative and ludicrous parts to the good ſenſe of our pupil, well ſuiting his con-

venience and ſprightly temper, quickly wear off what little reverence he may have remaining for his inſtructors: he is conſcious of having received no benefit from their teaching, nor found any thing deeper than form and words; ſees himſelf wiſer than them, and rejoices in the freedom of thought, now at length emancipated from their fetters. But whatever ſource he derives his notions from, whether education, example of his parents, or accidental inſinuations that have gained credit with him by hitting his fancy, he eſteems them all his own diſcoveries: for he will take nothing upon truſt, nor otherwiſe than as hints, until made his own by having the ſanction of his judgement. He hates trouble, thinks all painful inveſtigation needleſs, as tending only to perplex, and makes his deciſions eaſily without ſcruple or diffidence.

This gives him a ſuperlative conceit of his own underſtanding, which can diſcern right and wrong at a glance, for whatever ſtrongly ſtrikes his fancy carries an intrinſic beauty, and whatever does not co-incide with his ideas, he will venture to ſay muſt be abſurd in itſelf: by theſe marks he diſtinguiſhes the eſſence of things, as the eye diſtinguiſhes colours upon inſpection. In this faculty he participates of the divine nature, for God is perfect reaſon, whoſe intelligence may indeed be ſomewhat larger in compaſs, but in kind he will venture to ſay, muſt be juſt the ſame with his own: for there

there are no degrees in certainty and intuition, the mereſt ideot who can juſt know two and two make four, knows that as certain as Newton. He talks much of a nature of things, binding upon the Almighty, and marking out the field for omnipotence to range in, therefore by knowing that, he knows preciſely what God can, or cannot do: but he never vouchſafes to explain what he means by Nature, or what by Things, and if you aſk him, he laughs at your ſtupidity, or when moſt gracious, tells you, that you will not know, for fear it might undeceive you in ſome prejudice of education.

He knows nothing of human nature, as if Man was not among the things whoſe nature is continually in his mouth, but expects that every porter and chairman ſhould diſcern what is right without inſtruction or guidance. He never tries to improve the knowledge of mankind or ſtrike out any practical ſyſtem preferable to thoſe in vogue: whoſe uſes he takes no pains to examine, nor what inconvenience might enſue if they were aboliſhed without ſubſtituting ſomething better in their room. His delight lies wholly in oppoſition: if men believe nothing that is taught them, it is enough; no matter what elſe they believe. To build up would be laborious and pedantic, much more to defend ſuch an edifice as he could raiſe if it ſhould chance to be attacked: ſo he takes the eaſier, pleaſanter, ſafer talk of pulling down.

He loves to pick holes or make them wherever he can, to trip up an adverſary at unawares, or find an infirmity in perſons of eſteemed characters.

He is not ſo prone to anger as the bigot, except now and then when gravelled in argument, but as utter a ſtranger to diſcretion: for he will have his joke in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, and is never better pleaſed than in puzzling an illiterate perſon upon ſome common article of belief. Ridicule is his truſty weapon, as doing its work much quicker or cleverer than argument, for what cannot ſtand that touchſtone, muſt needs be abſurd: but any queer fellow that tries to joke upon him only makes himſelf ridiculous, for he never ſees an abſurdity in his own character though pointed out ever ſo clearly, ſo ſees no joke in any thing ſaid to expoſe it, and will venture to ſay he knows what is a good jeſt, as well as a good reaſon, He affects to appear mighty full of doubts, but in reality never doubted of any thing: for what he pretends to doubt of, he is abſolutely ſure muſt be falſe, becauſe he diſcerns the character of abſurdity in it by his moral ſenſe.

He takes his idea of Chriſtianity ſometimes from the extravagances of the Methodiſts, ſometimes from the tyrannical polic[illegible]he Papiſts, and perceives no inconſiſten[illegible]aking it either the deluſion of ſilly e[illegible]or deep laid ſchemes of crafty

immenſe riches and power, according as ſerves his preſent purpoſe. He runs down charity, and cries up benevolence, but groſsly miſtakes both the one and the other: for he places charity ſolely in building churches or giving money to beggars, and benevolence in eaſineſs of carriage and a chearful converſation, or in doing any obliging office for a friend, or acquaintance, that may be done without much trouble to yourſelf. He abhors perſecution as an invaſion of the rights of mankind, but he criticizes and teazes, derides and runs down with his contemptuous ſneer whatever he does not like, the only means of perſecution in his power: as if mankind had not a right to candid and equitable judgement with reſpect to their good name, as well as to their liberties and properties. He laughs at Satan and the burning fiery furnace; and remarks very profoundly that anger is a paſſion, and God being diſpaſſionate reaſon, cannot be angry nor diſpleaſed with any body: but could do no more than give men the faculty of reaſon with a freedom of indifference which if they abuſe by ſuperſtition and bigotry, they muſt inevitably run themſelves into perpetual miſchief, nor can the divine power help them, for it is not in the nature of things that they ſhould be happy.

5. Thus have I attempted to ſketch out the [illegible]gths both of bigotry and freethinking; if be [illegible] characters in life that take in the

whole compaſs, I am heartily glad of it, and ſhould be better pleaſed to ſtand convicted of having exaggerated matters, than found to have given a true picture of living originals. But I fear there are too many in the world who have made larger advances either way than they know of themſelves: for neither bigot nor freethinker will ever own or is ever conſcious of his being ſuch, nor ever fails of diſtinguiſhing the other plainly. For we can eaſily ſee the budget upon our neighbours back, but nothing is harder than to penetrate our own ſecret motives of conduct and grounds of perſuaſion, deſire having a more intimate connection with aſſent than is commonly imagined. There is a ſatisfaction attending the diſcernment of truth, which ſerves us for the mark to diſtinguiſh ſingle truths, not immediately ſupported by others, and make us as it were feel them, whence comes the epithet Palpable applied to truth or falſehood: now there are other ſatisfactions ſpringing from latent deſires, that frequently beguile us by giving that pleaſing countenance to whatever they faſten upon, which is the proper characteriſtic of truth clearly diſcerned. And perhaps there is a ſpice of either character, if not a mixture of both, greater or leſs, in the compoſition of every man: for we are all too cloſely wedded to our own notions, and too haſty to undervalue and cavil at thoſe of others. Therefore we ought

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to have a fellow feeling for perſons under either of the above-mentioned ſpecies of infirmity, and regard them only as a little further gone than ourſelves in the common diſtemper incident to the human intellects.

Nor are they uſeleſs in the hand of Providence, but like other evils, made to produce good fruits by balancing one another, and ſerving to keep the world in the middle road of ſobriety and diſcretion by their oppoſite attractions. Perhaps our clergy would grow remiſs in their duties and quite careleſs of their flocks, if it were not for the danger of having them all enticed away by the indefatigable inveiglements of enthuſiaſts. Perhaps they would be rigid and authoritative, placing Religion wholly in ſpeculative points, and giving out their own ingenious imaginations for the certain ſenſe of the ſacred records, if there were not the freethinker ready at hand to demand a reaſon for all they aſſert, and catch them tripping whenever a moment off their guard. Nor is it unlikely that many of the laity have taken a diſtaſte from the palpable abſurdities of enthuſiaſts, againſt that injudicious ſanctity that leads into them; or have been put upon finding reaſons for the faith that is in them, and taught to ſtand a joke, by being peſtered with the ſcoffers; or drawn by the diſputes bandied about, to diſcourſe of Religion, which elſe would

would have remained an unfaſhionable topic never to be mentioned in good company.

But it becomes not us to encourage or countenance evil that good may come of it; the permiſſion of evil is the prerogative of Heaven, who alone knows how to produce good therefrom: it is our part to acquieſce contentedly under what we cannot help, to uſe our endeavours towards remedying or leſſening the evil ſo far as we can, provided we do not apply perſecution, animoſity, contempt, or other remedies worſe than the diſeaſe, but eſpecially to be careful the infection does not take hold on ourſelves. For prejudice ſurrounds us on all quarters, and in one ſhape or other creeps upon us imperceptibly, nor perhaps is it poſſible totally to eſcape its influence. There are prejudices of education, prejudices of company and cuſtom, prejudices of private opinion, prior determination, inclination, habit, novelty, intereſt, convenience, and diſlike. Nothing ſo eaſy as to avoid Scylla by running upon Charybdis, this deceives both the bigot and freethinker, for while they ſtand aghaſt with horror at the rocks upon which others have been beaten, are themſelves ſwallowed up in the whirlpool: and in general men are apt to place the whole of prudence in guarding againſt ſome ſtriking folly obſerved in their neighbours. Being therefore apprized of our danger, we may ſee there is need enough

of vigilance and circumſpection: and what makes our ſteerage the more difficult is, that we are forced to employ the ſame gales for carrying us on our way, that threatens us with deſtruction.

6. For without education, without deference to the authority and credit in the inſtructions of our tutors, we ſhall ſtick at the firſt entrance into knowledge: without regarding the opinions of others, we ſhall make no improvement beyond the pedantry of a college, without compliance with general cuſtoms, we ſhall attain no knowledge of the world, nor be of uſe to any other than ourſelves, but muſt move each in a little ſphere of his own, not as one of the ſociety: without ſome ſteadineſs in our own determinations, and adherence to the convictions of our reaſon, we ſhall be perpetually wavering, whiffle about with every wind, never know what diſcretion is, nor ever perſevere in a regular courſe of conduct. Therefore we ought to give all theſe their proportionable weight upon us, not ſuffering any one to preponderate above the reſt nor exceed its due ſhare in our eſtimation: wherein lies the main difficulty, for whoever does not wilfully ſhut his eyes, may ſee they all deſerve a proportion of our regard.

For we muſt ſuppoſe men to uſe their underſtanding in what they teach and what they do, or at leaſt to have followed others before them who did uſe it: therefore whatever is received

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that way has the ſanction of their judgement on its ſide, on the other hand it will hardly be denied that whoever follows his leaders implicitly, or drives down with the torrent of cuſtom, whether in matters of doctrine or practice, will inevitably run upon many pernicious errors and abſurdities: whence comes the neceſſity of private judgement and uſing our own eyes. Nevertheleſs the general reception carries a juſt and ſtrong preſumption in its favour, not to be overcome unleſs upon poſitive and cogent evidence, nor without mature deliberation: for there may be an expedience found by long experience in things where the contrary appears upon a ſlight inſpection, and in all courts of judgement the burden of the proof lies upon him who tenders the iſſue. In like manner the deciſions fixed in our mind whether by inſtruction, example or former exerciſes of our own reaſon, carry the like preſumption, ſubject nevertheleſs to be outweighed by further examination or experience: and the adherence to them notwithſtanding this counter weight, is termed either conſtancy or obſtinacy, for both are the ſame quality of perſeverance according as well, or ill directed.

But in what particular caſes this perſeverance is a fault or a virtue, or when private judgement is to take place of authority or preconceived opinions, it may be impoſſible to lay down a rule for aſcertaining preciſely: nor were it expedien[t]

pedient for the world that ſuch rule could be found, for this would take away more than half the buſineſs of life. We ſhould then proceed mechanically in the beaten track, having no uſe for our underſtanding, unleſs now and then at ſtated ſeaſons, when our rule called upon us to exert it: but now we muſt keep our minds alert, having employment for all our faculties, as well to obſerve and conſider as to execute, and while we purſue our track, muſt look before and around us upon objects as they occur, uſing our beſt diſcretion to prevent us from either deviating wantonly, or ſcrupling to ſhift our quarter when occaſion ſhall require. We muſt expect to make ſome miſtakes, but may avoid ſuch as are pernicious and deſtructive; and I know of no better rule for leſſening them than to apply all our means of information, whether thoſe received from others, or gotten by our own ſagacity and induſtry, for balancing and correcting one another, and to beware conſtantly of the bias of paſſion; for this it is that always cramps the thought, and renders us narrow minded.

7. We have already ſhewn the dangers of vanity and ſelf-conceit, whether of being able to refine upon our teachers, or to lay open their utter ignorance: but theſe are not the only paſſions that deſtroy our freedom, they drive us forcibly into a licentiouſneſs of thought, whereas others operate by reſtraint; but perfect freedom

freedom cannot be enjoyed with total exemption both from force and reſtraint. The ſhackles caſt upon the mind may come from zeal for imbibed principles, ſcrupulous fear of doing wrong, ſhame of appearing ſingular, ſoftneſs to receive impreſſion from importunity and poſitive aſſertions, pliancy to cuſtom, inveteracy of habit, indolence of temper averſe to the trouble of examination, haſty determination a natural conſequence of the former, veneration or diſlike of particular perſons, intereſt, party, and private inclination. All which frequently prove grievous hinderances to the progreſs of our reaſonings, and yet ſome of theſe reſtraints are neceſſary to balance one another, to keep us ſteady in a good courſe, or drive us out of a bad one, ſo that we may find it needful to call in their aid ſometimes for our ſelf-defence: like the garriſon of a fortreſs, who, while the enemy ſcours the field, are forced to impriſon themſelves within their walls in order to ſecure their liberty. Well were it if we could always diſtinguiſh the friend from the enemy, that we might take to our faſtneſſes, whenever paſſion is abroad, but open our barriers to calm and ſober reaſon.

But this is a ſcience very hard to be learned, for paſſion ſo commonly marches under the colours and in the uniform of reaſon, or makes her approaches ſo covertly by the ſap and the mine, or by her magic glaſs of falſehood caſts ſuch ſhades upon

upon her adverſary, that we frequently miſtake the one for the other. Therefore it is incumbent upon us diligently to ſtudy her manner and motions, to liſten for the ſubterraneous thumps of the miner's ſpade and pickaxe, and carefully remark in what particular quarters ſhe is moſt apt to aſſail us: for by uſe and practice we may become more and more aware of all her wiles, which muſt enlarge our range of freedom; becauſe having learned to know when the coaſt is clear, we may ſally out boldly to forage for new diſcoveries in the field of contemplation, without danger of an ambuſcade.

But there is a particular fear that fetters the mind grievouſly when entering upon topics of Religion: ſome are ſo afraid of departing from the faith, that they will not depart from error or prejudice, whenever impoſed upon them as an article of faith. This ſhuts out all means of information or amendment: with ſuch a bar againſt them neither the Jew nor the Gentile could ever have been converted, the Papiſt reformed, nor the Enthuſiaſt reſtored to his ſenſes. We do not deny that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom, but will never bring it to perfection: our reverence and awe we ought never to lay aſide, no not for a moment, for in him we live and move and have our being, on his power we depend both in body and ſoul, and in our obedience to his declared Will conſiſts our happineſs. But he

requires not of us a ſlaviſh fear, for his ſervice is perfect freedom in all ſenſes, as well when we ſerve him with his talent of underſtanding, as with the active powers he has given us: nor ſhall we run leſs hazard of offending him by wrapping it up in a napkin, than by any involuntary miſtakes it may lead us into.

8. This ſervile fear often daſhes men upon the very rocks of offence they were apprehenſive of: for it makes them think hardly of God as of a rigorous taſkmaſter; it repreſents him as giving arbitrary commands on ſuppoſition that ſuch may magnify his authority: it pins them down to the letter without regarding the intention, attaches them to forms and ceremonies, not daring to penetrate into the ſubſtance; it draws them to imagine their help neceſſary to defend his glory and reſiſt his enemies; it drives them into cenſorioufneſs, deriſion, animoſity, and other kinds of perſecution, under pain of forfeiting their allegiance, until the zeal of the Lord's houſe hath eaten them up: it overwhelms them with ſcruples, miſgivings, terrors and deſperation, lays them open to credulity in dreams, omens, judgements, and ſupernatural events, debars them the uſe of their underſtanding as a preſumption and profaneneſs, and leads them to flatter God with perfections not belonging to him.

This laſt may ſeem an inadmiſſible paradox; for what flattery can there be of a Being who

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is the ſum and fountain of all perfection? But when we reflect how prone men of narrow views are to take their own errors and weakneſſes for excellencies, it will appear not ſo ſtrange that an over-timorous zeal for the divine glory, ſhould aſcribe ſuch excellencies to him, which he has not: and this is a groſs flattery, for which he will not think the better of them. It is this induces them to imagine him having his peculiar favourites, becauſe friendſhip is a virtue in themſelves, to diſtribute or withhold his mercies without other reaſon than his own good pleaſure, becauſe they eſteem it a right to beſtow their favours where they pleaſe without being aſked a reaſon, this ſets men againſt a univerſal Providence, leſt they ſhould contaminate his Purity and his Majeſty by allowing him any forethought of foul and trivial things; gives courſe to the doctrine of a Freewill of indifference and abſolute contingency of huma n action, leſt he ſhould be thought the author of ſin; prevents all impartial examination into the proper idea of infinite goodneſs, that Attribute which of all others is perhaps the hardeſt and yet the moſt intereſting for us to underſtand, for fear the little perplexities occaſioned by the ſcantineſs of our faculties ſhould be taken for a miſtruſt of it, and has carried ſome divines ſo far as to prove, that God is good to thoſe whom he damns eternally, becauſe he preſerves them in exiſtence; never

reflecting that Being without well-being is no kindneſs, and with perpetual torment is an intolerable burden, which according to our cleareſt ideas it would be a mercy to take off. But this ſophiſm is needleſs, becauſe we may ſatisfy ourſelves without it: that God is good I both ſee and believe: that he is infinitely good I believe though I do not ſee it; for I am too conſcious of the darkneſs of my underſtanding, to think myſelf warranted to reject every thing that I fail of ſeeing: therefore to perſuade myſelf that I ſee it when I do not, becauſe I fancy it will pleaſe, is no better than arrant flattery. For my part, the moſt pleaſing thing to the Searcher of hearts ſeems to me to be a ſtrict examination of my errors and ignorance, with a reliance on his Providence for diſpelling ſuch of them as he judges proper: and if I have any other hereſy I ſhould wiſh to know it, as the moſt likely ſtep to put me in the way of obtaining a cure.

9. But fear is the beginning of wiſdom, therefore to be kept as a neceſſary guard upon the learner, until he has gotten a compleat command of his imagination: for that roving faculty is apt to throw up wanton, fantaſtical, irreverent, miſtruſtful, deſponding, gloomy, perplexing ideas, which have been catched by ſympathy from the company of giddy, ſanguine, or melancholy perſons. Theſe imaginations ought all to be baniſhed inſtantly

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as ſoon as they offer to intrude, nor ſhould he be leſs afraid of his own fears that ſtart up at ſeaſons from indigeſtion, diſappointment, ill humour, or bodily diſtemperature: a little obſervation will diſcover them by their changeable quality, ebbing and flowing by fits, and teach him to pay them no regard until he has had leiſure to reviſe them in lucid intervals. The like caution will ſerve againſt very ſtriking fancies that dart ſuddenly with the force of ſelf-evident truths, but are often found hollow upon a ſecond view, or a cloſe and calm examination The urgency of appetite too, the impetuoſity of deſire, the avocations of pleaſure, are no otherwiſe to be reſtrained, nor the lethargy of indolence rouſed, than by alarming him with terrors. But after theſe troubleſome enemies are tolerably brought under, ſtill to retain the ſame degree of terror would be bad policy: for then it becomes vicious, tending only to obſtruct the operations of the underſtanding.

So that fear, like other medicines, is either ſalutary or pernicious according to the ſubjects whereto it is applied, and ought not to be given in extremes nor adminiſtred without good knowledge of the patient, and due conſideration of the caſe. The bigot would fill every body with fears, though he has none himſelf, nor even caution, or proper reverence where moſt juſtly due. The freethinker would baniſh all fear, and caution, and reverence along with it, and

would emancipate the world in the ſame manner as an apprentice is emancipated by running away from his maſter: but the only deſirable emancipation is that attained by having ſerved his time and learned his trade. Freedom of thought muſt be acknowledged an edged tool, neceſſary to the artificer as he cannot do his work cleverly without it, but extreamly dangerous to be played with by the novice: it muſt be handled gingerly at firſt, or we ſhall run a hazard of cutting ourſelves, or other folks who have the misfortune to ſtand within our reach; nor muſt it ever be brandiſhed about wantonly or heedleſsly, for the oldeſt workmen have been known ſometimes to do themſelves a miſchief. As there is a ſimilitude in liberty of all kinds, we may gather ſome profitable inſtruction by obſerving wherein freedom of converſation and carriage conſiſts: not in utter contempt of all rules and decency, but a thorough underſtanding and habitual expertneſs in them.

The well-bred gentleman behaves eaſily in all companies, is never at a loſs how to deport himſelf, can ſpeak his mind freely, and maintain his juſt rights upon occaſion, yet without failing a whit of the reſpect or reverence due to any preſent; and can utter bold truths even to ladies without breach of good manners, or giving the leaſt offence. Bring an unlicked cub into company, and you find him ſhy and ſheepiſh, never knowing when to ſit or ſtand,

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uneaſy in all ſituations; he dares not ſay his ſoul is his own, aſſents if you tell him black is white, and if a lord aſks him what's o'clock, thinks it high treaſon to anſwer. Set him looſe at once from his fears, and you may make him directly a freethinker in behaviour, he talks loud and pertly upon all ſubjects, contradicts and criticiſes, and joſtles any body, puts the women to the bluſh with his ſmutty jokes and rude jeers, is poſitive and tenacious in trifles, and thinks himſelf as good as the beſt man in the kingdom. If he chance to have a volubility of pen, he entertains the public weekly with calumniating the great, if a ſlender ray of Parnaſſus, he cuts and ſlaſhes in ſatire, not againſt vices and follies, but againſt particular perſons marked out by the populace for hunted deer, no matter for plan or moral, one or two of Horace's purple rags botched together with coarſe ſeams of abuſe will gain prodigious applauſe among the many: if a topping influence in a borough, he moves for preſents of gold boxes, not ſo much to give pleaſure to the perſons receiving, as becauſe he thinks it will vex ſome others: if a ſmattering in Philoſophy, he runs off a treatiſe againſt miracles or prophecies, or manfully defends the natural rights of mankind, againſt attempts made upon them by the hierarchy ſome two or three centuries ago; if of divinity, he ſhows the clergy know nothing of their buſineſs, nor are half ſtrict enough, but

lays out certain methods of practice and articles of faith never heard of before, as indiſpenſibly neceſſary to ſalvation.

Thus we ſee in all caſes how freedom proves a dangerous inſtrument in undiſciplined hands, that the management of it is a peculiar art not to be learned without careful application and experience, nor practiſed without cool circumſpection and reſerve; that apprehenſions are not to be caſt off at once, but ſuffered to ſubſide by degrees in proportion as the ſcholar advances in proficiency, nor can ever be totally diſcarded without imminent danger of miſchief.

10. Since then it appears ſo very difficult to run currently along the ſtrait line of liberty without ſtepping aſide into ſervility or licentiouſneſs, it behoves us to ſeek for what diſpoſitions of mind may guide the feet aright by keeping the eye ſteady upon its proper point. As precipitancy and paſſion, eſpecially vanity, are the greateſt miſleaders, it is obvious that a reſervation for ſecond thoughts, a quiet coolneſs, a modeſty and humility of temper, are the ſafeſt preſervatives, nor can there be thorough freedom without them: for whenever a man undertakes to demonſtrate his opponent in the wrong, or run him down with reproaches, you may pronounce him under an intemperance of mind that does not leave him perfect maſter of his thoughts.

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From this rule of ſobriety and humility ſpring ſeveral branches: firſt, a decent deference to authority without an implicit faith, and a candid conſtruction of opinions however ſingular: for one cannot ſuppoſe men embrace errors knowingly, but take them in a lump as appearing connected with ſomething juſt and ſolid, or are led into particular errors by ſome ſpecious reſemblance of truth. Therefore candor will incline us to examine the ſeveral parts of a ſyſtem, with a perſuaſion of finding ſomething tenable in the bundle; and is never ſo well ſatisfied with its judgement of a miſtake, as when it can diſcover the fallacy that might eaſily miſlead a well intentioned perſon thereinto.

Next, an unbiaſſed equity, unſolicitous o give triumph or vexation to any man or ſet of men, having no favourites, or rather bearing an equal favour to all, agreeable to that ſaying of Tully we have often ſeen quoted, I am a friend to Plato, a friend to Socrates, but more a friend to truth: and ready to give every thing its due. This equitable temper will render the poſſeſſor averſe to oppoſition and contradiction ſo far as can poſſibly be avoided, pleaſed with none other contention than that of brotherly love and good offices, labouring at reconcilement in part, if it cannot be effected entirely, ſtudious to ſave the credit of an antagoniſt, careful to give no offence to the unwary, and aiming always at the general good. It prompts to regard

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the uſe and end of things, their tendencies as well as their intrinſic value; to diſtinguiſh between the form and the ſubſtance; to diſcern what is eſſential, and what only a barrier to protect the former, or an expedient to lead into it: endeavouring ſo to accommodate the road for the paſſage of different travellers, that they may proceed without interfering or joſtling, as perceiving that the ſeveral tracts of it may terminate in the ſame journey's end.

Thirdly, a temperance of imagination not to be ſeduced by the charms of novelty, nor thrown off the hinges by any ſtriking diſcovery or ſhining obſervation, regarding real uſe preferably to every other object, capable when neceſſity will permit of ſuppreſſing whatever might offend the weak, or ſcandalize the ſcrupulous, or be miſunderſtood ſo as to appear ſubverſive of more important truths; herein practiſing that which the great maſter of eloquence, in his three dialogues upon that art, lays down for one of the firſt rules to be obſerved by an orator, That he be careful to let nothing drop which might do hurt to his cauſe.

Laſtly, what in a former chapter we have called the ſcience of ignorance or knowledge of what we cannot do, which will withhold the profeſſor from driving at all lengths whether with a probability of attaining them or no, or entering upon topics where he can hope to add nothing to what was known by every body before:

fore: in example of the true poet, who, as deſcribed by Horace, examines the ſtrength of his ſhoulders, what they are able to bear, and what they would ſink under, and when meeting with a ſubject he deſpairs of ever bringing to a good poliſh, he prudently paſſes it over.

With theſe defences, which may be termed the Panoply of Liberty, I ſhall endeavour to arm myſelf againſt dangers, and though I cannot pretend to eſcape them all, but no doubt, ſhall be found ſometimes to maintain an error, or purſue an argument that had better have been omitted; yet when it is conſidered what precautions I have taken, I ſhall hope to ſtand acquitted of ill deſign or heedleſſneſs: as for involuntary ſlips, it is not in mortal man to avoid them, eſpecially in ſuch rugged and ſlippery paths as I ſhall be obliged to paſs along. But ſince we have found vanity the moſt formidable enemy which yet is but an excreſcence from the deſire of commendation, that life and vigour of virtue and all manly performances: it ſeems expedient before I proceed onward, to beſtow a Chapter upon it, in order to give it a thorough examination, that we may always know the excreſcence from the genuine branches.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Vanity.

BUT how ſhall we manage to purſue our examination effectually? where find the ſcales nice enough to weigh a bubble, or get a needle fine enough to pick up a vapour, that we may turn it about for our inſpection on all ſides, ſo as to diſcern exactly its make and colours. We can all ſee vanity at a diſtance with a ſtriking plainneſs; it is like the clouds gathered in a body, whoſe tinſelled edges glitter to the weſtern Sun: but who can ſee the vapours drawn up by his meridian beams to form thoſe clouds, though ſtanding in the middle of the ſtream that flows copiouſly around him? So that other vapour, which ſurrounds us always like an atmoſphere wherever we go, eludes our ſight by its nearneſs. It lies too cloſe to the eye to be diſcerned, too flat upon the ſkin to be taken hold of: it inſinuates among our pores, mingles among our vital juices, trips along the tongue, dances upon the eyes, trepidates through the nerves, wantons in the geſtures, lurks among the ſentiments, taints the imagination, and runs throughout the whole conſtitution; inſomuch that it has been generally thought

thought innate, as an eſſential part of the human compoſition.

But though nature will not own the monſtrous birth, it muſt be acknowledged one of the earlieſt of our acquiſitions, which being bred in the bone will never go out of the fleſh: for we ſuck it in with our milk, imbibe it from our parents, catch it from our playfellows, are enticed into it by our ſelf-love, encouraged to it by the world, and confirmed in it by the general practice: ſo that education, ſympathy, and example all combining to rivet it in us, it is no wonder it grows into an inveterate habit, giving birth to moſt of our latent motives, operating upon us imperceptibly, and ſo perpetually entering the ſcale of judgement, as ſcarce to be diſtinguiſhed from the other weights. For by its pervading quality infuſing itſelf into them all, it can ſkulk under a thouſand diſguiſes, and Proteus like aſſume a thouſand various forms, taking always the ſimilitude of whatever covering it lies under. One never knows where to have it ſure, if you mortify it in one ſhape it gathers new life in another, if you weed it effectually out of one ſpot, it inſtantly ſprouts up in the oppoſite quarter behind you: ſo that with all the pains you can take your work is never ended, nor your vigilance allowed a moment's reſpite.

Vanity is given to children with their playthings, and taught them with their inſtructions: they

they are made to ſhow about their little toys, to angle for every body's admiration at their prettineſs, and bid to be mannerly by way of ſetting themſelves above the dirty beggar boys in the ſtreet. In youth the fancy runs upon particular advantages poſſeſſed above others, whether bodily ſtrength, ſagacity in outwitting, handſomeneſs of perſon, or finery of dreſs, luxuriates in affectation of all trifling kinds, and renders the ſchool they were bred up in, the way of life they have been accomſtomed to, or little accompliſhment they chance to have ſucceeded in, infinitely preferable to every thing elſe in the world beſides. In manhood there are riches, or family, or favour of the great, or magnificence in buildings, or equipage and all the pride of life, adminiſtering fuel to vanity: the deſire of excelling actuates all, and in the conſciouſneſs of it they place their prime delight: every one has ſomething belonging to him better than his neighbours, and does ſomething in a cleverer manner than any body elſe; and to make his ſuperiority the ſurer, deſpiſes every other accompliſhment wherein he cannot ſhine eminently himſelf. If the gifts of fortune are ſhown an inſufficient ground for a man to value himſelf upon, he will aſſume a title from thoſe of nature, from endowments of the mind, from learning, good breeding, or other proficiency: if driven out of this claim too, he may be vain of his virtues, or miſtake his eagerneſs to outſtrip

ſtrip for a zeal to make the greateſt proficiency he can in them.

This paſſion operates where one would leaſt expect it, ſets up the mechanic for a judge over judges, qualifies the common councilman to dictate meaſures of ſtate, ſerves for inſpiration to the enthuſiaſt, ſupports the Methodiſt under his inceſſant labours, and reigns in triumph over the freethinker. The wily ſorcereſs contrives means to neſtle in the boſom of Religion, works hollow paſſages under the ſolid ground of Philoſophy, and finds a crevice to ſlip through into treatiſes on humility. Perhaps a tincture may have infuſed itſelf unperceived into this very page, under the ſpecious appearance of relieving the Reader that he may return with freſh ſpirits to drier diſquiſitions; or the glittering ſand of ornament been ſtrewed, not ſo much to ſet off the ſubject, as by a ſecret impulſe prompting to ſet off the operator.

2. But though I will not undertake to pronounce aſſuredly in all caſes what is vanity and what is not, yet where one can perceive the water muddied by ſomething wriggling under it, I ſhall try my beſt to catch hold on the ſlippery eel: that I may apply her to the microſcope to examine her carefully, and diſcover the ſlender threads that are the ſpawn by which ſhe multiplies. I am not unapprized that Ambition of all kinds from that of the ſtateſman down to the fidler, and Pride are diſtinguiſhable from Vanity:

Vanity: the firſt being a greedineſs of acquiring ſuperiority, the ſecond a fond contemplation of that we have, and the laſt a like fond humour of ſhowing it. But ſince unneceſſary diſtinctions tend only to burden the mind, and I ſee no occaſion for them here, I ſhall comprehend all three under the one term by which I have entitled this Chapter; as they all ſpring from one common principle, the love of excelling others.

It may be remembered that ſatisfaction is the magnet directing every turn of our volition, the ſolid ſubſtance giving weight to all our motives; nature at our birth has annexed ſatisfaction to certain ſenſations, as of taſte, or warmth, or reſt, or little motions of the limbs, and at firſt we receive none other than what come by their conveyance. But very ſoon ideas of reflection make a lodgement in the infant mind, beginning the ſtores of experience there, and form the faculty of imagination, by means of which the apprehenſion of abſent pleaſure becomes immediately pleaſing: whence grow the appetites currently counted natural, and ſuppoſed to be born with us. But then thoſe ideas only are pleaſing in the apprehenſion whoſe archetypes were ſo in the ſenſation, for appetite prompts to nothing but what has afforded ſatisfaction when applied to the ſenſes: which proves thoſe ideas to have no intrinſic goodneſs in themſelves, becauſe

becauſe deriving their attractive quality from the action of external objects.

As the little ſtock of experience encreaſes and imagination gets a larger field to play in, ſtriking out new aſſemblages and trains not worked by the ſenſes, there ſprout up other appetites from that of pleaſure: theſe are ſtiled natural too, and with no great impropriety, becauſe flouriſhing more or leſs in every ſoil univerſally, and appearing very early without any cultivation, they are the product of cuſtom, our ſecond nature. For I have endeavoured to ſhew in the chapters of my firſt volume upon the four claſſes of motives, how uſe grows from pleaſure, and honour from uſe by tranſlation: for being firſt found ſatisfactory as a means conducive to their reſpective end, in proceſs of time the end drops out of thought, and then ſatisfaction becomes compleatly tranſlated to the means, reſting upon it as an end without intervention of any other. Hence it appears that honour, however propagated among individuals by ſympathy, derives its origin and receives its value immediately from uſe, but remotely from pleaſure; that nothing is laudable in itſelf, nor otherwiſe, than as conducive to happineſs, which conſtitutes the real eſſence of rectitude, how much ſoever honour may be our proper mark whereby to diſcern it; and that commendation is there moſt juſtly due where it may be moſt uſefully applied.

3. This appetite towards approbation, whether from other perſons or from our own mind, does, like other appetites give an immediate pleaſure in the gratification or the means tending thereto; and ſometimes to the bare proſpect of objects proper to gratify it, though lying out of our reach: as a baſket of delicious fruits, though not beautiful to the eye may pleaſe the ſight without our wanting to eat of them. Such pleaſures are of the mental kind, not the ſenſitive, having no dependence upon the ſenſes, but ſeated wholly in the reflection: unleſs you will call them internal ſenſations excited by the play of ideas in the reflexive faculty, whoſe operations in ſome caſes are ſtiled notices of the moral ſenſe, diſtinguiſhing between objects agreeable or diſagreeable inſtantaneouſly, as the eye diſtinguiſhes colours.

This property of the moral ſenſe miſled the Stoics to place the eſſence of rectitude in the agreeableneſs diſcerned thereby: for they inſiſted that virtue was its own reward and good in itſelf, becauſe the exerciſe of it is attended with a ſoothing complacence of mind, and becauſe actions were acknowledged to be right, although manifeſtly tending to our own damage, or that of others: therefore the τὸ καλὸν or honeſtum or beauty of things diſcerned by the moral ſenſe, conſtituted their whole goodneſs; and that nothing was good nor contributed a whit to happineſs beſides rectitude of ſentiment

and

and conduct. Whereas a little reflection may convince us, that rectitude is ſo far from being good in itſelf or the ſole good, that it would have no goodneſs at all, nor even a being, if there were nothing elſe good, whereto it might conduce. Were it in my power to reſcue a worthy family from ſome imminent danger or utter ruin, why ſhould I think it right to do ſo, unleſs ſome benefit would accrue to them therefrom? their incurring the miſchief would be no fault in them, nor their eſcaping it a virtue, but a piece of good fortune: therefore if this eſcape were no good nor contributed any thing to their happineſs, it would be juſt as right for me to withhold, as to give my aſſiſtance. And the like may be ſaid of every other act we perform, if it does not tend nearly or remotely to ſome enjoyment the reception whereof is no virtue, we might full as well, as rightly, and as commendably let it alone.

Well, but ſuppoſe I had beſtirred myſelf to the utmoſt in warding off the miſchief, though without the leaſt ſucceſs; ſtill every body would acknowledge I had done right and applauded me for my good intention, though of no avail to the parties: why, ſo I hope they would, becauſe I ſhould do the ſame by them upon the like occaſion; but let us conſider upon what grounds I ſhould judge this approbation due, namely, becauſe a ſtrenuous act of kindneſs indicates and ſtrengthens a benevolent

diſpoſition of mind which may have better ſucceſs another time, and helps to encourage it by example or ſympathy, in others who will have opportunities of becoming more ſerviceable thereby to their fellow-creatures. Thus commendation becomes due to right action, becauſe uſeful in ſtimulating to future right actions of like beneficial tendency; and for this reaſon alone, does not at all depend upon the preſent ſucceſs, nor for any intrinſic goodneſs in the deed abſtracted from its good effects.

Then for placing the value of virtue ſolely in the complacence accompanying the practice, this would make it a narrow ſelfiſh principle: for then I am to do a good act not for the good that may redound to any body therefrom, nor even for my own future profit, but for my preſent amuſement to pleaſe myſelf with the performance. Beſides that complacence is to be found in other practices; the child can find it in his plays, the ſchoolboy in his exerciſes, the miſer in his gainful ſchemes, and the villain in his cunning tricks: ſo that if preſent complacence made the goodneſs of things, there would be none other difference between virtue and trifle or roguery, than that it happens to hit the fancy. Thus it appears in all lights, that the true value of rectitude does not lie in an inherent beauty ſtriking the moral ſenſe, but derives from a reference to ſomething elſe that is not virtue. Nevertheleſs our moral ſenſe, generated

by

by our own experience of things we have forgotten, or conveyed by inſtruction and ſympathy from others upon an experience we never had, may prove an excellent guide, not ſafely to be neglected, for directing us into meaſures having a tendency to happineſs, too remote or too intricate for us to diſcern.

4. The pleaſure ariſing from the three ſcenes of reflection before ſpoken of, ſeems to be the ſame in kind, differing no otherwiſe than in the objects affording it: for the ſtate of mind and inward feel of the proud man, when reflecting on his excellencies, varies nothing from that of the voluptuary contemplating the exquiſite dainties he is going to ſit down to, or the covetous man when ruminating on the treaſures he has gotten: each being none other than joy taken in the poſſeſſion of ſomething eſteemed deſirable. If I were to hazard a phyſical account of this matter, I ſhould conjecture there was ſome little fibre of the mental organization, whoſe play had a quality of ſtriking the joyous perception, or as we vulgarly ſay, tickling the fancy. Joy when occaſioned by the contraſt of very diſſimilar objects, along which it proceeds by continual leaps and bounds from one to the other, becomes mirth: whence ſome have profoundly maintained, that laughter proceeds always from contempt, or a compariſon of ourſelves with ſomething greatly our inferior; from which doctrine it would follow, as

Addiſon obſerves, that inſtead of ſaying ſuch a one is a very merry man, we ought to ſay he is a very proud man.

But there is another inference many times drawn in ſober ſeriouſneſs therefrom, namely, that ridicule is the touchſtone of falſehood, becauſe whatever excites our laughter muſt needs be contemptible and abſurd: and if we object that the beſt of things have often been turned into jeſt, we are anſwered that whoever does this makes himſelf ridiculous, and not the things he jokes upon. I ſhall not repeat what I have urged in the chapter on the paſſions to ſhew, both that contempt does not always produce laughter, and that laughter flows from ſeveral other ſources; I need only obſerve here, that the provocation to mirth, even where it does ariſe from contempt, is a very unſafe evidence to truſt to: for it is well known, the prejudice of vanity will ſometimes weigh down perſons and actions and qualities in our eſtimation that were really far above our own, ſo as to make us triumph where we had more reaſon to be mortified: and witty burleſques of the nobleſt performances have, in the eyes of many people, carried off all the admiration belonging to them; or if this does not happen, one may laugh heartily at Virgil traveſtie, without either deſpiſing Cotton, or abating one's admiration of Virgil. The touchſtone of ridicule was probably introduced into the preſent century by miſtaking

miſtaking my lord Shaftesbury, whom I ſhould underſtand to recommend ridicule, not ſo much as a means of making diſcoveries yourſelf, as of prevailing upon other people, and a ſurer method of eradicating popular deluſions than perſecution; agreeably with what Horace had laid down long before, That humour for the moſt part cuts ſhort great diſputes, more effectually and better than acrimony: yet both are an addreſs to the paſſions not to the underſtanding.

If there be a particular fibre exciting joy in the mind, it never begins to play until put in motion by ſome of thoſe exhibiting our other ideas of reflection; and may be brought gradually to connect with any of them upon ſucceſſive alterations in our texture, made by their working in among one another until they come into contact with it: by which proceſs I conceive Tranſlation effected, the pleaſurable object drawing in the means of attaining it, until in time they touch the joy-exciting ſpring, and then ſlipping from between the means become immediately pleaſurable in themſelves. However this be, nobody can doubt that different objects give joy in the reflection to different perſons, and are made to do ſo by education, example, cuſtom, and other external cauſes; nor that they may ſucceſſively change their quality in the ſame perſon, for he that was fond of pleaſures may now become fond of gain, and afterwards

terwards prefer honour incomparably before both.

5. The ſenſe of honour and calm but ſoothing joy, ſpringing from ſelf-approbation or the conſciouſneſs of rectitude in our proceedings, is perhaps the moſt uſeful and valuable acquiſition of mind we can make: without a competent ſhare of this appetite, our life would paſs inſipid, our conduct reſemble that of brutes; we ſhould not act as members of ſociety though living in it, but could be kept in order only by dread of puniſhment, nor ever become qualified for liberty. It is this makes the greateſt part of our enjoyment, for pleaſures fall rarely in our way, and if we follow them cloſely, quickly ſatiate and become inſipid: and uſe will not ſupply us with conſtant employment, for we cannot always find opportunities of purſuing our advantages; and when we do, though the view of benefit may put us upon the taſk, yet the reflection of acting right carries us through the ſeveral ſteps for compleating it: the tradeſman and mechanic, driven into their profeſſions for a livelihood, nevertheleſs are actuated therein as much by a regard to their credit and the commendableneſs of induſtry, as by thought of the profit they are making: or if they want theſe motives, preſently grow idle and neglect their buſineſs.

The enjoyment diſtilling from this ſource is ſure and ſincere, unmingled with dregs and unpro-

productive of future inconvenience: for diſappointment works no change in the colour of our actions, and involuntary miſtake leaves no regret behind, but brings a healing ſalve, in the circumſtance of its being involuntary, for the hurts it may lead into. Neither is it liable to be ſtopped by accidents, becauſe depending wholly upon ourſelves, not upon externals as pleaſure and profit do: nor to be dried up by ſickneſs or age, for the diſeaſed and infirm ſtill have ſomething to do in bearing and eaſing their burdens, and even ſeaſons of utter inability leave room for the comfortable retroſpect of a former conduct. Therefore it is well worth our while to cultivate an habitual taſte for this pleaſure, which will never fail nor deceive us. The ſtoical doctrine was ſo far right, as that if a man could always have his judgement clear and his inclination ſtrongly ſet upon following it invariably, he would always be happy.

This habit ſupplies the deficiency of our views, and conducts to many benefits we know nothing of: for had we always a clear inſight into the whole reſult of our meaſures, and a lively preſent apprehenſion of the pleaſures to be compaſſed by them, we ſhould want nothing more either to direct us in the choice, or quicken our alacrity in the purſuit of them. Therefore I have hinted in a former place, that it is poſſible the perfect ſpirits of the inviſible world may have no virtues belonging to them becauſe needing

needing none: for if their intelligence be ſo extenſive as to reach all the minuteſt conſequences of every action offering to their choice, and their judgement ſo juſt as that diſtant enjoyment weighs equally with the preſent, they will conſtantly purſue the road of happineſs without any other motive to influence them. To call off their attention to any rule of rectitude would be, if not doing a diſſervice, at leaſt ſuperfluous: for they will always do what is right for the apparent benefit of it, without other mark to direct their choice, or ſpur of ſelf-approbation to urge on their activity.

But this manner of procedure I conceive is not virtue, for I can agree once more with the Stoics in laying down, that virtue loſes her eſſence unleſs embraced purely for her own ſake upon account of her beauty, in apprehenſion of her being a good in herſelf without reference to pleaſure or profit, or any other object beyond the very act of performance. Many things may be right wherein ſhe has no further concern than to ſee they are innocent, and not contrary to her intereſts: if a man leaves a ſhop, becauſe he has found another where he can be ſupplied with better wares; if he relieves the honeſt neceſſitous poor in a borough, to ſerve his intereſt by the credit of it at an enſuing election, he certainly does right, but it is no virtue, becauſe not done upon a motive of rectitude.

But

But how ſpacious a range of underſtanding ſoever there may be in the other world, we are certain it lies confined within a very narrow compaſs in this: we do not always know what will be wanted for our pleaſures, ſo are forced to be taught a deſire of profit, which urges to lay in a ſtock of uſeful things, without diſcerning what particular pleaſures they will yield. And our uſes often lie ſo remote, and require ſuch a long train of various preparations to provide for them, that we very rarely know which way to turn ourſelves, ſo as ſhall prove moſt advantageous to our intereſts. All that can be done is to form rules upon our own experience, or take them from the experience of others; and having gotten a full confidence in our rules, to follow them upon a general perſuaſion of their rectitude, without knowing or without ſeeing why they were right; or if they claſh, to determine the preference between them by an intuitive view of their reſpective beauty and rectitude; intuitive, not of their eſſence and nature, but of the records impreſſed in our mind, which may poſſibly have been falſified, yet are the only guide we have; whom if we neglect, we ſhall never work out other advantages than thoſe lying from time to time juſt before our feet.

And where we do diſcern our diſtant pleaſures and uſes moſt plainly, yet the ruſt of indolence is apt to hinder the balance from turning with

with them, or ſome preſent deſire magnified by the nearneſs of its object, to outweigh them; ſo that if there be any trouble or ſelf-denial lying acroſs the way, we cannot purſue them. For it has been found upon examination of human nature in the firſt volume, that preſent ſatisfaction is the motive which conſtantly influences us in all our actions; and that diſtant good never moves us unleſs there be an appetite urging towards it, whoſe preſent gratification, or uneaſineſs upon being thwarted, is ſtrong enough to counterpoize every other deſire. So we muſt be bribed to work out future advantages by ſatisfaction continually given in hand during the purſuit of them.

Now the charms of rectitude and ſweets of ſelf-approbation, in proportion to the ſenſibility we have of them will beſt ſupply this continual ſatisfaction; Profit and other inclinations may afford it copiouſly enough ſometimes, but then they flow unequally by uncertain tides, only when opportunity ſerves, or the humour ſets in ſtrongly; and often ſtir up an activity worſe than indolence, as leading into cruel diſappointments, and grievous miſchief. Whereas the ſatisfaction ſpringing from a conſciouſneſs of well-doing, flows with an even, uninterrupted motion, checks the exorbitances and wanderings of other deſires, and when riſing in any competent degree, renders the conduct uniform, regular,

gular, prudent, profitable to the practiſer, and beneficial wherever elſe there is room to be ſo.

Not but this ſtream has its tides too, nevertheleſs they do not depend upon the wind and weather of humour and accidental allurements, but upon the occaſion requiring more vigorous efforts, upon the load of obſtruction to be removed by them, and when riſing high are capable of removing mountains. For experience teſtifies, that a ſenſe of honour and the comforts of a good conſcience have carried men through toils and labours, ſelf-denials and dangers ſupported them under misfortunes, afflictions, and diſtreſſes; enabled them to bear hunger and thirſt, pain and poverty, diſappointment and injury, oppreſſion and ſlavery; to ſacrifice life itſelf with its moſt favourite advantages; and to perform wonders one could ſcarce have thought poſſible to human nature. This principle, though valuable in all, yet more eſpecially deſerves cultivation in perſons of large abilities and high ſtations, to ſet them above private intereſt and vulgar paſſions, to make their talents extenſively uſeful, nor can any great work, affecting the intereſts of multitudes, be achieved without it.

6. But there is a falſe honour, the object of a depraved appetite, almoſt as pernicious as the other is beneficial: I ſay almoſt, becauſe like other evils it many times by chance brings forth excellent fruits, whereas the genuine never did hurt.

hurt to the owner, and very rarely to any body elſe, not unleſs miſguided by unavoidable miſtake. Now in order to know them apart let us obſerve, that natural appetite in its perfect ſtate prompts only to wholeſome foods: but when depraved, hankers after ſuch as are unwholeſome and frothy, which hurt the conſtitution, or at leaſt afford no nouriſhment. In like manner it has been found among our former enquiries, that honour grows from uſe, as that does from pleaſure, and is there moſt deſervedly belonging where it may be moſt uſefully applied. But it cannot be uſefully applied unleſs the object whereon it fixes be uſeful, that is, productive of happineſs: with this only difference between the natural and moral appetites, that the former excite to our own ſuſtenance alone, whereas the latter extend to things that promote happineſs any where. And the reaſon of the difference is obvious, becauſe the victuals eaten by another can contribute nothing towards nouriſhing me, but the Attribute of Equity inſures me a proportionable ſhare in all the enjoyment I can procure for another.

Yet though the object be uſeful, the appetite may not always be ſo; if immoderate, or needleſs, or ill-timed, ſo as to ſpend itſelf in idle reflections when it ought to be ſputring on to action: in all theſe caſes whether of being turned upon wrong objects, or wrongfully applied, it degenerates into vanity. For if honour prompt

prompt to things miſchievous or trifling, to revenge, to contention, to pulling down a rival, to contempt of application and induſtry, or to finery, to fantaſtic airs, to ſkill in diverting tricks or harmleſs plays, it is miſplaced; if it ſo engroſs the man as that he cannot ſtoop to common buſineſs, nor do any thing unleſs for the ſake of ſhining, it is immoderate; if upon having uſefully ſpurred on the learner to acquire valuable accompliſhments, it ſtill continues to ſtimulate after they are become habitual and eaſy, and he can go on currently without a ſpur, it is needleſs; and if it amuſe him with the retroſpect of what has been bravely done, while there is work lying at hand that wants further diſpatch, it is ill timed and unſeaſonable: in all which inſtances it is the working of a vitiated and depraved habit.

7. There is ſcarce any thing harder in the whole ſcience of human nature and morality than to ſettle the proper point of honour, or to draw the exact line ſeparating the true from the falſe. I find the difficulty riſe upon me the further I enter into my ſubject, for while we kept in generals it was eaſy to ſee that honour is there moſt deſervedly placed, where it will be moſt uſeful; and that a juſt ſentiment of it will incline the poſſeſſor always to purſue what is right in preference to preſent pleaſure or eaſe, or profit, or allurement of any paſſion whatever: but when we come to particularize the points

points whereto this ſentiment ought to direct, it ſeems as impoſſible a taſk, as that mentioned in the fable of making a ſuit of cloaths to fit the moon, who changes her ſhape every night. For honour bearing a reference to uſe muſt neceſſarily correſpond with the variations found in that; but the profeſſions and ſtations of men are ſo various, that whatever courſe of conduct you fix upon as moſt laudable for one, will be found of little avail for the next.

The ſoldier places his point of honour in fidelity and contempt of danger, and he does right, becauſe theſe qualities render him ſerviceable in his profeſſion: the merchant has no perſonal dangers to encounter, nor command of his prince to execute, ſo he may be cowardly and grumble at public meaſures without much inconvenience, but he values himſelf upon punctuality in his payments, and acquitting himſelf ſkilfully of his commiſſions; the common labourer has no payments to make nor correſpondents to ſatisfy, ſo it is beſt that he ſhould value himſelf upon doing the work well he is hired to, without loitering or purloining any thing. Perhaps there are none utterly deſtitute of a ſentiment of honour, which if ſo miſplaced as to prove detrimental to them, may yet have been highly beneficial to perſons in a different ſituation from whom they copied it. So I ſhall not undertake to canvas this delicate ſubject compleatly, as being paſt my ſkill, but only to gather

gather ſuch obſervations and explanations occuring to me, as may help to give us a little inſight into the nature of it, yet without confidence of their being always exactly juſt: and to form ſome rules for determining our judgement, which nevertheleſs admit of large exceptions, according to the particular caſes whereto they may be applied.

8. Honour firſt riſes out of uſe in our early childhood, by means of that advantage found in the help and encouragement given by perſons about us according to our behaviour, until having run frequently in that track it becomes tranſlated to the behaviour itſelf; ſo that children can applaud or take ſhame to themſelves in ſecret for things they do not apprehend will ever be known: and thus I conceive the appetite giving ſelf-complacence or compunction generated. As they grow up, they cannot long fail of obſerving that riches, title, rank, magnificence, bodily advantages, natural talents of the mind, and improvements made from either, are eſteemed ſubjects of admiration and applauſe: whence by the like progreſs as before, they learn a ſelf-approbation in whatever of theſe they poſſeſs, and in any advances made towards them. In proceſs of time they find, or are told, if they have the luck to fall under good guidance, that the poſſeſſion of theſe things is for the moſt part wholly and always

partly owing to fortune, upon whom their ſelf-approbation has no effect to make it better or worſe: which therefore deſervedly belongs only to their own actions, and the ſentiments of mind that may influence them aright in the application of ſuch powers and opportunities as fall to their lot.

By further obſervation or inſtruction they learn that applauſe is ſometimes diverſly and contrarily beſtowed, that the objects of common admiration have not always that efficacy to enſure happineſs as imagined, and that the purſuit of them often leads into inconveniences greater than their value when attained. This puts them upon judging for themſelves upon the value of things independently on the general eſtimation: but finding that paſſion or ſecret propenſities are apt to warp the judgement, or prevent its influence upon the conduct when cleareſt, they muſt perceive that an unbiaſſed judgement, and a ready diſpoſition to act in purſuance of it, are the beſt acquiſitions they can make: becauſe in proportion as they can attain theſe, all other good things attainable will follow of courſe. Thus the ſeat of true honour lies wholly in our own ſentiments and actions, and the fruits of it are that ſelf-approbation and complacence of mind ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of having judged impartially upon the beſt lights the occaſion would

would afford, and conducted ourſelves accordingly without failure or deviation. The judgement may err, but this makes no alteration in the ſtate of mind: paſſion and prejudice will often ſlip in unawares to miſlead us, but can never do it ſo privately, as to eſcape the conſciouſneſs of ſomething paſſing amiſs, which then changes the complacence into compunction.

But when I place the eſſence of the Honeſtum, or laudable, ſolely in the rectitude of our ſentiments or meaſures, as the proper ground of ſelf-approbation, without regard to the ſucceſs, or to externals, or other people's eſtimation, I muſt ſubjoin a caution or two, to prevent my being miſapprehended as giving into the ſtoical extravagancies. Firſt, let us call to mind that there are other complacencies beſides that of ſelf-approbation: if a man be hungry on a journey and find a commodious inn, he feels a complacence in the ſight of it: ſo he does in the preparations making by the people of the houſe for his dinner, in poſſeſſion of the victuals when brought upon the table, in carving and eating them: but here is no ſelf-applauſe in all this. Or if he were in purſuit of ſome particular preferment, and is told the miniſter in whoſe diſpoſal it lies, has received a very advantageous character of him, I ſuppoſe he will find the news very complacent to his hearing: and ſo it may well be, without making him think the higher of his merits for what his friend has

ſaid, or his patron believed of them. In like manner there is a complacence in the poſſeſſion of eſtate, rank, credit, reputation, ſagacity, learning, and the advances making towards them; and this complacence is no blemiſh in the character, for happineſs is the proper buſineſs of life, and every innocent pleaſure or gratification of deſire is ſo much acceſſion to happineſs: yet are they no ſubjects of ſelf-applauſe, nor need a man value himſelf upon being happy or having the means of enjoyment in his power; for the complacence of ſelf-approbation is a diſtinct ſpecies from that ariſing from pleaſure or profit, and if engrafted upon them, will degenerate into arrant vanity. So a man may juſtifiably rejoice in externals, or whatever is the ſubject of general eſtimation, and purſue them, ſo he does it conſiſtently with the rules of prudence and moderation, as things pleaſurable or uſeful, not as laudable.

The next caution I would throw in is, that by drawing our complacence ſolely from our own judgement and adherence thereto, I be not underſtood to require an utter contempt of the practices and opinions of the world, for this would rather encourage vanity than avoid it: the obſervation of what others think and do, is one neceſſary means of informing our own judgement, and in matters of form and ceremony that is commonly right which is moſt generally received: the judgement of others may juſtly give a ſanction

a ſanction to our own, or even direct it where we have no better lights, yet ſtill it ought to operate by way of conviction or information, not of impulſe, like a torrent driving us before it. He that has not conſtancy to withſtand the ſtream of cuſtom when his clear judgement directs the contrary way, or has not compliance enough to give up any fond humour of his own for the general convenience; will never perſevere ſteadily in a laudable courſe, bending with the ſolid banks, but forcing the crouded reeds to bend under it. What are the exact meaſures both of conſtancy and compliance lies beyond my ſkill to aſcertain, and perhaps any body's elſe: it is enough to give warning that there are extremes on both ſides; let every man uſe his beſt care and diſcretion to avoid them.

Nor yet would I prefer what is ſpecious in theory to what is feaſible in practice, or inſiſt upon a greater refinement of rectitude than the parties to whom it is recommended can bear. Mankind muſt be treated in a manner ſuitable to their reſpective conſtitutions of mind: if you could entirely take off their admiration from the objects which ordinarily excite it, you would hardly ſucceed in placing it upon better; ſo you would only deprive them of thoſe incitements which ſtimulate them to induſtry in their profeſſions, and that veneration for high ſtation which helps not a little to keep them in order: therefore no more can be diſcreetly attempted,

than to bring the mind gently by practicable degrees to look inwards, and ſeek for complacence in her own motions, turning it off from externals in proportion as it can be found in theſe. Neither would I be ſo rigid as abſolutely to condemn all ſelf-valuation upon the gifts of nature, or fortune, or the improvements made upon either; for cuſtom, ſympathy and the daily language of all we meet with, draws ſo continually this way, that it may be impoſſible wholly to avoid it: but then this ſpice of vanity, though excuſable from natural infirmity, is not commendable, but ought to be carefully watched over, to receive no willing encouragement at any time, and be diminiſhed as faſt as poſſible by taking all occaſions of inuring ourſelves to examine the rectitude of our proceedings. For rectitude is not ſo deſtitute of charms, but that ſhe would captivate many more hearts if ſhe were more attentively looked upon: and men would much oftener act rightly, if they would take the trouble of reflecting oftener whether they do right or wrong.

9. Vanity in all ſpecies of it conſiſts in a compariſon of ourſelves either with particular perſons or the common run of mankind, or ſometimes with other creatures and even inanimate Beings: for when the humour takes we can value ourſelves upon the privileges of human nature, aſſuming the title of imperial Man, Lord of the creation; and is ſtirred up by the ſight of any thing

thing ſuperior or inferior to what we have ourſelves, prompting to emulate the one or deſpiſe the other. But the true ſenſe of honour reſpects only the laudableneſs of the deed, without reference to what is done better or worſe by another; for his acting rightly takes nothing from our rectitude, nor can his failing excuſe our own. Therefore the virtuous man is never better pleaſed than when he ſees examples of virtue around him, for his benevolence makes him rejoice to find ſo many participate in that which he eſteems the moſt plentiful ſource of happineſs: on the other hand the vain man reſts ſupremely ſatisfied while ſhining among his inferiors, but if a competitor ariſes to eclipſe him, he is inſtantly mortified. The terms Excellent, Noble, Exalted, Tranſcendent, Incomparable and the like, uſually employed in diſcourſing on things laudable, may make it imagined, that all honour ſubſiſts by compariſon, if we do not reflect that complacence of every kind may ſpring from contemplation of a ſingle object without proſpect of any other to compare with it.

A man with a good appetite may rejoice in his victuals without thinking how much better they are than bread and cheeſe, or take pleaſure in receiving the preſent of a bank note without ſtaying to compute how many times it is more valuable than a ſhilling, or delight in the conveniencies of a houſe that he has taken,

though he does not reflect how much he ſhould miſs them if obliged to remove into the next cobler's ſtall: ſo the conſciouſneſs of having acted right in any inſtance, may yield its full complacence to him that has a taſte for pleaſures of this kind, though he never thinks of what would have happened if he had acted wrong. I know very well that compariſon often enhances our pleaſures, and as there is more joy in Heaven over one ſinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine juſt perſons who need no repentance, ſo the ſinner himſelf may feel an additional joy in contemplation of the wretchedneſs from which he has obtained deliverance: and I acknowledge that the complacence in well-doing will be greater in proportion to the pains, the dangers, the difficulties, the temptations a man has ſurmounted in performing it. But the latter caſe is not a compariſon, any more than the muſic of a concert, becauſe exceeding that of a ſingle flagelet: and in the former it does not conſtitute the eſſence of the pleaſure found in ſelf-approbation, it only makes an acceſſion from another fund, for what I did right to day is equally ſo, whether I did right or wrong yeſterday.

But wherever the complacence of an action ariſes wholly from the contraſt, and would be loſt if a different object were ſet together in proſpect, it is certainly a ſpice of vanity: nor can juſtly be called a ſelf-approbation, becauſe reſting

reſting upon two baſes, the performance of another perſon equally with our own. Yet it may be ſaid that rectitude directs to the more excellent performances in preference to the leſs, which nevertheleſs might have been commendable if the others had not come into competition; a man may reſt ſatisfied in the prudent management of his own affairs while he has nothing better to do, but if ſome public ſervice interferes which cannot go on without his helping hand, it would become wrong and blameable to keep ſtill immerſed among his private concerns: ſo that compariſon ſeems here to determine the eſſence of laudableneſs.

But when we conſider the matter attentively, we ſhall find the leſs excellent loſes nothing of its value upon opportunity offered of the greater, but becauſe we cannot do both, the omiſſion of the former outweighs in the ſcale of rectitude, and the latter is not a whit the more laudable for the other being in our power. The caſe is the ſame in matters of profit; where a man may pick up a guinea or a ſhilling but cannot get both, I ſuppoſe he will take the gold: not that the ſhilling is worth a farthing the leſs, or the guinea the more for lying by one another, but becauſe by taking up one he muſt miſs of the other. Whereas the nobleſt action weighs nothing in the ſcale of vanity, unleſs the multitude or ſome particular perſon be ſuppoſed incapable of equalling it. Beſides that rectitude has

has nothing to do with compariſon, unleſs where there is a choice of different actions, and then it compares between things and not perſons; judging of the excellence upon what the performer himſelf might have done, not upon what any body elſe can do better or worſe than him: which makes another remarkable difference between it and vanity.

But is not the ſenſe of honour, when in its moſt perfect ſtate, rouſed by the ſight of excellence in others? does it not powerfully ſtimulate to the imitation of noble examples? will it not raiſe an ardent deſire and eager wiſh to copy the brighteſt patterns of virtue, even when it has no hopes of ever being able to equal them? All this I can very readily allow, and the more readily becauſe I look upon it as the ſureſt ſign of the appetite being genuine and vigorous: but this does not amount to a compariſon of perſons, as we may perceive by examining the ſimilar motions of other deſires. An empty ſtomach may lie quiet without giving diſturbance while there is nothing in proſpect to ſet it a craving, but the ſight of a company ſitting down before a plentiful meal will preſently make the mouth water to be doing the like; the more heartily they feed, the better they ſeem to enjoy their repaſt, the greater will be the longing: yet the deſire here fixes ſolely upon their victuals, nor has any thing to do with the perſons; for if the hungry

ſpectator

ſpectator be admitted to ſit down among them, and find enough for all, he will not care how many others partake with him, nor how fully they ſhare in the enjoyment. If a traveller on foot almoſt wearied down be overtaken by a carriage, I ſuppoſe he may wiſh to have a lift, and if he can obtain one, will rejoice in his eaſy ſituation; how many people ſoever there be in the vehicle, it makes his ſeat never the worſe, provided there be good room for him; nor the better that he paſſes by hundreds of travellers ſtill on foot: and if he have any thought of ſuperiority over them, this is no gratification of the natural appetite for eaſe which makes riding pleaſant, but an impulſe of vanity.

So when a laudable example ſtirs up an impatience to do the like, or makes a man aſhamed of himſelf for falling ſhort of it, if his appetite be ſet right, it is the thing done, not the party doing, with which he draws the compariſon: for if he can once upon trial ſucceed in the performance, he has his deſire, no matter how many others make the trial too, nor how they acquit themſelves; their ſucceeding throws no obſtacle againſt his ſucceſs, nor does their diſappointment promote it.

10. Therefore the deſire of excelling is not the ſame with the deſire of excellence: the diſtinction between them is pretty nice and commonly overlooked, but there is a juſt and real one, and very material to be well ſtudied,

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beeauſe by this touchſtone we may try the genuineneſs of our moral ſenſe. Men are forward enough to aſpire at things great and noble; but then it is generally, whether they know it or no, only to give them an eminence and ſuperiority above others, which is as well anſwered by the depreſſure of every thing elſe above them, as by their own advancement: and have ſo little value for the heights they aſpire to, that they could be fully contented to ſtand where they are, provided they could be aſſured that nobody elſe would ever come up to them.

But he that deſires excellence can take nothing in compenſation for the want of it; to ſee others deprived of it affords him no gratification, nor will his complacence in the attainment be abated by their partaking with him: for he regards the intrinſic value of the poſſeſſion, without looking onward to other objects from whence it may draw a value by compariſon. The ſoldier may find a compleat ſatisfaction in the conſciouſneſs of having done his duty in the times of danger, the magiſtrate in the uprightneſs of his judgements, the phyſician in his cares for the diſeaſed, the tradeſman in his honeſt induſtry, every private man in the ſincerity of his dealings, although he ſhould believe there are thouſands beſide who have the ſame fund of complacence. But when once he begins to ſay with himſelf, Nobody is ſo careful of his conduct as I, or to make an amuſement of pitying the thoughtleſs

multitude

multitude around, he is drawing within the magic circle of vanity: for genuine pity always carries a degree of uneaſineſs, therefore whenever we feel a joy in the exerciſe of it, we may be ſure it is ſpurious and hypocritical.

Not that I mean to condemn all obſervation of other people's conduct, nor compare them together or with ourſelves, in order to excite our abhorrence of what is bad and whet our appetite for what is good, for we may profit more this way than by confining our thoughts ſolely to our own ſpeculations, upon the ſame grounds that make example more prevalent than precept, becauſe what we ſee before our eyes ſtrikes a ſtronger idea upon the imagination, than any we can raiſe by ourſelves: but when we have once gotten our full idea we have done with the archetype, the benefit accruing therefrom being by information for our future conduct, not by encreaſe of complacence in our preſent, all further contemplation might prove dangerous, as drawing us from following the impreſſion ſo received.

Nevertheleſs it muſt be owned that in many caſes, to excel is the neceſſary point to be driven at; where there are ſeveral competitors for the ſame thing, ſome one muſt prevail by his comparative not his abſolute merit; no matter how little he have, provided all the reſt have none, nor how much, while there is another ſtill more deſerving: and this happens ſo fre-

frequently, for ſcarce a day paſſes but we are ſtruggling for ſome prize, important or trifling, which cannot be had by all, that it leads us inſenſibly into a habit of placing our honour upon ſuperiority, and perhaps is the principal cauſe of that univerſal depravity of taſte. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to guard againſt this evil cuſtom with all our vigilance: if we can ſucceed in bringing our appetite to faſten upon what we do ourſelves without reference to what is done elſewhere, we ſhall loſe nothing by the change not excepting that ſuperiority the world is ſo fond of, for whatever of it can be attained, we ſhall attain by conſtantly doing our beſt. Even in common converſation I would have a man endeavour to ſhine, but why need he ſtrive to outſhine? let him ſhine as bright as he can, and if outſhining be in his power it will follow of courſe without his ſeeking, if not in his power he will but fret and vex himſelf by ſtriving for it.

When competition becomes unavoidable by our being one among many ſtriving for the ſame thing which all cannot attain, the deſire of ſurpaſſing the reſt ranks in claſs among the motives of uſe, not thoſe of honour: the indulgence of it is juſtifiable not laudable, nor need we value ourſelves thereupon any more than upon ſtriking an advantageous bargain. But occaſions of this ſort happen ſo often, that the frequency of them tranſfers ſatisfaction from the advantage gained by

by ſurpaſſing to the ſurpaſſing itſelf, and thence forward we purſue it as an ultimate object of deſire. To avoid which tranſlation it will be prudent as much as we can, to keep the particular advantage in view, ſo as to remain indifferent to the thoughts of ſurpaſſing, unleſs when neceſſary to attain ſome other allowable purpoſe; for ſo long as the end continues in proſpect, tranſlation to the means can never take effect.

11. I have ſaid before that the ſenſe of honour has its tides, which ought to be regulated by the occaſion according to the force requiſite for ſurmounting obſtacles that chance to lie in our courſe. When ſome new praiſe-worthy habit is to be acquired, it behoves us to uſe all our ſkill and induſtry for raiſing a ſtrong deſire, that may carry us through difficulties of the firſt entrance: but after being grown familiar and eaſy, whatever goes beyond that gently ſoothing content, diſtilling from the conſciouſneſs of rectitude in the moſt common actions, is needleſs, unſeaſonable, and therefore a waſte: for our ſpirits cannot keep up an ardent glow unleſs now and then for a little while, and if we ſpend them unneceſſarily, we ſhall want them for more important occaſions. People for the moſt part value themſelves upon what they have acquired until they ſink into indolence by loſing all deſire of making further attainments: here their

their eſtimation is miſplaced and conſequently vicious.

When this paſſion riſes to an immoderate degree, ſo as to hang continually upon the thoughts, it becomes pride, and proves an effectual bar againſt all ſubſequent improvement: not ſo much from lazineſs as ſelf-ſufficiency: for the proud man ſo wraps himſelf up in his excellencies as to think he is all perfection already, or at leaſt incomparably ſuperior to the reſt of mankind, which renders it ſuperfluous for him to do any thing even for the ſake of ſurpaſſing. But if we recollect what has been ſhewn in the proper place, that honour is there moſt deſervedly placed where it may prove moſt uſeful, we ſhall ſee that it belongs primarily to nothing elſe than the right management of our powers and preſent opportunities, becauſe there alone it can take effect: and ſecondarily to acquiſitions, whether in poſſeſſion or proſpect, as it may ſpur on our induſtry to improve, or attain them. For a man cannot encreaſe his wealth, his dignities, his health, nor the merit of his paſt performances, merely by the admiration of them: but if he have a ſtrong appetite for ſelf-approbation in the employment of every preſent moment, this will urge him vigorouſly to employ them ſo as may afford ſuch gratification.

It will be aſked perhaps whether the value of rectitude does not lie partly in the pleaſure of a retro-

retroſpect upon good conduct paſt; and whether ſuch pleaſure may not be laudably indulged. I readily admit this as one very valuable reward of virtue, and may be innocently received when offering of its own accord: but I ſee nothing laudable in the indulgence, as that term implies a ſtudious hunting for it, and ſtriving to make it dwell upon the reflection. Where this is done I apprehend it happens from the too common miſtaken fondneſs for intenſe pleaſures, which we have made appear in the Chapter upon that article, make nothing near ſo large an addition to the ſum of our happineſs, as thoſe of the gentler kind: for our mental organs as well as our bodily muſcles can bear only a certain degree of play; if put upon violent or continual exerciſe, they loſe their tone, nor can give their firſt reliſh, but their motion becomes inſipid and cloying. Therefore the proud and the vain man lie under the ſame error, though leſs innocent, with the boy who wiſhed to ride all day long upon a gate; they find a vaſt entertainment in contemplation of their excellencies when newly diſcovered, ſo conclude they ſhall be ſupremely happy by keeping them in view without intermiſſion: but the guſt of novelty quickly flies off, and though they continue the exerciſe from inveteracy of habit becauſe they cannot help it, they find no more joy in it but continual mortification by the ſpiteful world refuſing them juſtice.

Therefore true honour and true policy, which conſtantly unite, point always inwards upon the action now in our power: or if at any time they draw the eye to diſtant and external objects, it is only in order to direct or invigorate our endeavours in this. Such refined ſentiment with a total indifference to all other allurements is indeed a height of perfection too far above the reach of mortal man, to be enjoined as a duty: if it is the white ſpot in the middle of the target which nobody muſt ever expect to hit, yet by repeated efforts we may come a little and a little nearer. And there is abundant encouragement for us to uſe them, for in proportion as we grow more habitually expert at hitting the mark of rectitude in all caſes, not only of virtue and duty but likewiſe of common prudence and propriety, we ſhall compaſs all other attainable ends without aiming at them; but for the unattainable, they were better let alone, becauſe nothing beſides labour loſt and vexation of ſpirit could enſue upon our trying for them: a ſpontaneous complacence would accompany every thing we do, with ſo much tranſport occaſionally as our organs can bear, ſo much pleaſing retroſpect as our eyes can behold without ſtraining, and ſo much general approbation too as is needful or fit for us to receive.

12. Having now endeavoured to ſettle the eſſence of true honour, which regards ſolely our own conduct together with ſuch other objects

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as may ſerve to rectify it, I might pronounce every ſelf-approbation ſpringing from a compariſon of ourſelves with other perſons, or of things with reſpect to the perſons poſſeſſing them, as falling under the denomination of vanity. But this I fear would be thought too ſevere and rigorous, unleſs I may be allowed to diſtinguiſh an excuſeable ſpecies of vanity, which is ſo much as ariſes unavoidably from the infirmity of human nature. For we are ſo perpetually drawn into the train of making compariſons by the example of all around us, by the general language and manner of expreſſing eſtimation, ſomething of this turn appearing in the motions, the geſtures, the tone of voice, the looks, and frequently the dreſs of every company we fall into, as renders it impoſſible to eſcape the infection. Whatever then we catch involuntarily this way may be ranked under the claſs of indifference lying between laudable and blameable.

But this ſpecies is aſcertained by the degree, whatever paſſes the line of innocent moderation may be declared vicious; the difficulty lies in drawing the exact line, and determining what ſhall be deemed an extreme: we ſtand open here to the like attack as was made of old by the Academics and Sceptics againſt the judgement of the ſenſes, with their ſophiſm of the Sorites, or argument of the Heap; becauſe, ſay they, if you drop a number of things upon one

another you can never tell preciſely when they begin to make a heap. But if I cannot tell the preciſe number of bees requiſite to make a heap or a ſwarm, ſo that if a ſingle bee flies off, the remainder will not be one, yet if I ſee a cluſter of them as big as a pomkin, ſurely I may pronounce that a ſwarm, without danger of miſtake. Therefore I ſhall not undertake to ſet out the exact limits of vicious vanity, but leave it to every one's own judgement to diſcern what lies manifeſtly within them; if he be tolerably obſervant, he will find more of whoſe denomination he cannot doubt than perhaps he can eradicate: to attempt to direct him might be only miſleading him, ſince the ſame thing may be vanity in one perſon or one ſituation which is not ſo in another; as the ſame meal may be too much for a priſoner, which would ſcarce ſuffice him when enjoying the air and exerciſe of a journey. Therefore I need only try to point out the miſchiefs naturally attendant upon vanity, in order the better to engage his obſervance in diſcovering, and diligence in guarding againſt it.

13. I have already remarked that it engroſſes the attention from other objects whereon it might have been much better employed: for the proud man is ſo taken up in contemplating, the vain man in diſplaying, and the ambitious man in encreaſing his ſuperiority, as leaves him no room to think of any thing elſe not relative thereto;

thereto: ſo he has not half the uſe of his judgement or powers, but ſlips his opportunities where the improving them would have redounded greatly to his advantage. But beſides this, it proves a perpetual fund of contention, producing it even out of trifles; for it being impoſſible that more than one ſhould gain the ſuperiority, wherever this is the aim there muſt neceſſarily be an oppoſition: ſo the proud looks upon every body as an adverſary; if they ſhew a diſpoſition to excel in any thing, it is an attempt to eclipſe his luſtre; if they mind their own buſineſs quietly, there is a hazard that by the prudent management of it, they may come up nearer to his pitch than he wiſhes. And the miſchief ſometimes ſpreads to multitudes not originally concerned in the quarrel: for the world muſt be thrown into confuſion, becauſe Pompey could not bear an equal, nor Ceſar a ſuperior.

From the ſpirit of contention naturally proceed cenſoriouſneſs, calumny, jealouſy and envy; theſe evil weeds may ſpring from other cauſes, as a competition of intereſt; but then for the moſt part they are only particular and occaſional, whereas vanity renders them more general and habitual, having a ſuſpicion of every thing that may hurt it. The vain man, as ſuch, muſt neceſſarily be ſelfiſh, as having a ſeparate intereſt inconſiſtent with that of all other people, who it may be preſumed would willingly

do ſomething for their own advancement; ſo he looks upon them as his rivals throwing obſtructions in the way of his deſire to excel: he cannot afford them the leaſt ſpark of hearty eſteem, becauſe that would raiſe them a little nearer to his own level: he dares not do them real ſervices nor ſincerely wiſh them well, becauſe he would conceit himſelf the only happy and deſerving perſon alive: or if at any time he does a kindneſs, it is only for the vanity of ſhewing his power, or raiſing a dependence.

Nor is his temper of mind more injurious to others than troubleſome and dangerous to himſelf, laying him open to flattery and impoſition: if you can find means to tickle his vanity you may do any thing with him, ſerve any end upon him; he loves you prodigiouſly, but as he loves his horſe, without any degree of eſteem or benevolence, merely for being inſtrumental to his pleaſures: he is diſcontented and fretful at not receiving his due from the world; if falling into any trouble or affliction, gloomy, deſponding, and querulous, as not deſerving ſuch treatment from Providence. He would meet with continual mortification, for conſidering how many various qualifications there are among mankind, he could very rarely be the topmoſt of the company in all points, but that he has a trick to elude theſe accidents: for he perſuades himſelf that whatever he happens to be expert in, is the only valuable accompliſh-

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ment, all others being not worth having: by this artifice, if there be twenty people together, each may be the only happy ſoul in the circle bearing away the bell from all the reſt.

14. But this little temporary pleaſure of an imagined ſuperiority, the flattering bait of pride to get her ſwallowed down into the entrails until ſhe takes habitual hold on the heart, is greatly overbalanced by many ſolid miſchiefs: for nothing operates more powerfully in perverting the judgement, that guiding faculty by whoſe miniſtry alone we may render all the others ſerviceable. The vain man can never think juſtly of things nor equitably of perſons, where his vanity has any the leaſt concern, which it ſeldom fails to have in moſt caſes occurring for his deciſion. It throws a bar againſt improvement by the perſuaſion of a ſufficiency already attained: it ſhuts his ear againſt information and his heart againſt conviction, leſt he ſhould appear ever to have been wanting in knowledge or liable to miſtake. It prevents all ſelf-examination, for fear he ſhould find ſomething that might wound his vanity: it renders him indocible of that moſt uſeful ſcience of ignorance: for he knows of none within him to be the object of ſuch ſcience: It falſifies the weights and meaſures of right and wrong, truth and falſehood, laudable and blameable, making him judge of them according to what he has or does, or believes himſelf, exaggerating his

own and depreciating whatever belongs to another. It damps his induſtry by the diſdain of little acquiſitions as unworthy his notice, whereas it has been often obſerved, that a ſhopkeeper will never thrive who deſpiſes ſmall profits: in like manner we feeble, ſhort ſighted mortals, who at beſt are but pedlars in the trade of virtue, ſhall make no great progreſs at all if we neglect opportunities of gaining a little ground at a time. But the conceited will ſtoop to nothing that is not grand, noble, extraordinary, he muſt preſide at the helm, or convert heathen nations, or draw multitudes at his heels, or knock down all oppoſers with demonſtration: and if by ſcorning to do any thing common he undertakes nothing feaſible, he ſolaces himſelf with reflecting what mighty wonders he ſhould have performed if ſuch or ſuch perverſe incident had not fallen in the way.

Vanity taints religion itſelf and contracts the pale of ſalvation, uſurps the power of the keys to ſhut, though very rarely to open: for it will not ſuffer the patient to bear the thought of ſharing the favours of heaven in common with others, nor to admit a total dependence even upon the Almighty; but he muſt claim ſomething as entirely his own which God did not give him, and this ſomething he can find no where elſe, at leaſt in ſo eminent a degree as in himſelf. He ſees nothing of that chearful

proſpect

proſpect of nature which I have ſhewn, in the Chapters on Benevolence and Equality, ſtands conſpicuous to a benevolent eye: for one can be juſt to the advantages and enjoyments of all where one wiſhes well to all, but he wiſhes well to nobody, for fear it might endanger his ſupereminence. His delight, ſuch as it is, lies in finding fault, in undervaluing, in blackening, in hypocritical commiſerations; ſo being converſant only with objects turning the worſt ſides, he ſees every thing wretched and deſpicable around him: and in melancholy moods, which will come upon us all ſometimes through indiſpoſition of bodily humours, or croſs accidents, or want of engaging employment, has nothing to comfort himſelf, but laments a defect of goodneſs in the Diſpoſer of all things, for he has no notion of goodneſs that does not ſingle him out for his object.

If examples are not to be found of all theſe miſchiefs produced in their full extent by vanity, it may be aſcribed to that little mixture of good principle which has place in the moſt faulty characters, or to other paſſions counteracting it, or to the awe of the world keeping it a little within bounds: for vanity, how much ſoever cheriſhed by the owner, appears always odious to others, who look upon it as an attempt to encroach upon their right to reputation; ſo defeats its own purpoſe, and by exacting more than due, diſcourages the payment of what is due:

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for you cannot praiſe a proud man without giving him an occaſion of triumphing in his ſuperiority over you, and thereby becoming neceſſary to your own diſgrace. Therefore he ſtrives to conceal his pride, nor dares even think within himſelf that he has it, by which concealment he checks the growth of it a little, as the growth of weeds is checked by being covered from ſun and air: ſo that perhaps there is not a thorough proud man upon earth, ſo compleatly ſuch as may be conceived in theory; and if there be ſuch a Being exiſtent, it can be none other than the Devil. Yet whoever will reflect ſeriouſly upon what has been above ſuggeſted, can ſcarce fail of ſeeing the natural tendency of pride to produce all thoſe pernicious conſequences above ſpecified, and that they muſt neceſſarily abound more or leſs in proportion to the degree and inveteracy of the habit: which by reaſon of the continual forced concealment juſt now ſpoken of, works more ſlily than any other into the ſentiments and actions, and operates unperceived by the party himſelf. Wherefore we cannot be too vigilant over the wily ſerpent, nor too induſtrious to bruiſe its head whenever popping out, that it may have the leſs vigour to wriggle among our vitals, and ſpread its venom about in our conſtitution.

15. Nevertheleſs it will probably be aſked, would I then extinguiſh every ſpark of vanity in the world? every thirſt of fame, of ſplendor, of

of magnificence, of ſhow? every deſire of excelling or diſtinguiſhing one's ſelf above the common herd? What muſt become of the public ſervices, of ſciences, arts, commerce, manufactures? the buſineſs of life muſt ſtagnate. Nobody would ſpend his youth in fatigues and dangers to qualify himſelf for a General or an Admiral. Nobody would ſtudy, and toil, and ſtruggle, and roar out liberty to be a Miniſter. Perhaps in the next century, when the preſent ſet of generous patriots ſhall be extinct, the boroughs muſt pay their members wages again to ſerve for them. The merchant would not drudge on through the infirmities of age in filling his country with foreign commodities. The artificer, having gotten a competence ſufficient to ſerve his pleaſures, would leave the art to be practiſed by novices and bunglers. The man of learning would not ſpend his ſpirits early and late to enrich the public with knowledge, to combat error, or defend his favourite truths againſt all oppoſers. Perhaps this great city might become depopulate, we ſhould ſaunter about among the cattle, or gallop madly after foxes, our language would grow ruſtic or childiſh, our dreſs ſlovenly, our perſons naſty, our manners rude and coarſe: poetry, muſic, painting, elegance, wit and humour, would be loſt from among us, the eaſe of affability, politeneſs, obligingneſs, and the pleaſures of ſprightly converſation, be things unknown. How will you keep your children from

from rolling in the dirt any longer than while you ſtand over them with the rod? how bring the ſchoolboy to aim at any thing more than juſt performing his taſk? how prevent your ſons from conſorting with the black-guard, or your daughters from romping among the grooms?

Now to confeſs the honeſt truth, I am afraid if this evil weed were totally eradicated, ſo as to leave no fibre of it remaining any where, we ſhould find buſineſs of all kinds go on very ſlowly in the world: for we have for the moſt part ſuch a lumpiſh indolence in the clay of our compoſition, ſuch an inſenſibility to all beyond the preſent impulſe of appetite, as cannot ordinarily be rouzed to action without this fiery drug; or where other paſſions do inſtigate, they would make mad work unleſs this were employed to check them by its counter-action. Yet theſe benefits do not hinder it from being a weed of poiſonous quality, for it is well known that poiſons are often antidotes againſt one another, and many of them are uſed as medicines: yet there is no prudence in applying them where the caſe does not abſolutely require it, nor other remedies may be thought of that will ſucceed as well. For my part I cannot help being perſuaded that education may be carried on as effectually without any tincture of vanity: I found no occaſion for it with my Serena and my Sparkler, on the contrary I endeavoured ſedu-

louſly to pick out every ſeed as faſt as ſprinkled by any old woman of their acquaintance: and I have the pleaſure to find they have made as good proficiency in every little accompliſhment I could give them, have as much reputation in the world, and are as well received even among perſons of quality as I could wiſh. As to boys I cannot ſpeak upon experience; I had vanity enough while a ſchoolboy: as ſoon as I could read currently, having gotten ſome books of chivalry, I determined upon making the conqueſt of the world; but being of a weakly conſtitution and continually bumped about by other boys, I found this ſcheme impracticable, ſo at thirteen reſolved to write a poem finer than Homer or Virgil. Before I went to the Univerſity, being taught that the ſolid ſciences were more noble than poetry, I purpoſed, as ſoon as I ſhould have made myſelf perfect maſter of logic, to elucidate all uſeful truths, and baniſh error from among mankind. What benefit theſe ambitious projects may have done me I know not: perhaps my preſent labours might be owing to ſome remains of them, for I well remember that while the deſign of theſe diſſertations lay in embryo in my head, they promiſed a much more ſhining appearance, than I find them make now I can review them upon paper.

If maſters can find none other way of bringing the lads to take their learning willingly unleſs

leſs by raiſing an emulation among them, I would not debar them from the benefit: no more, if a nurſe has none other way of keeping her child in order than by frighting him with an old man in the cupboard who will take him away when he is naughty, would I be ſo indiſcreet a freethinker as to diſpute the reality of the old man: for it is better the child ſhould be kept good by ſuperſtition, vanity, or any other means, than not good at all. But there may be a commendation which has no perſonal compariſon in it, and the pleaſures, the advantages, the credit of a proficiency in learning, may be diſplayed in alluring colours without ſuggeſting a thought of ſuperiority over others, or of equalling the topmoſt. I have acknowledged before, that it is a very delicate point to diſtinguiſh between the deſire of excellence and the deſire of excelling, and the one is very apt to degenerate inſenſibly into the other: yet I think it may be effected by a ſkilful and attentive tutor, and the former preſerved in its purity will anſwer all good purpoſes more effectually without endangering the inconveniencies expectant upon the latter.

As for perſons in public character, I believe they muſt be allowed a larger door than ordinary, becauſe I know of none other incentive vigorous enough to carry them through the continual application, the toils, the ſelf-denials, neceſſary for performing great ſervices: unleſs

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it be a hearty public ſpirit founded upon the ſtrong habitual perſuaſion of an indiſſoluble connection between the general intereſt, and private. Whether what I have before offered concerning the divine Equity and univerſal dominion of Providence, may contribute a jot towards introducing ſuch perſuaſion, or may put others of greater abilities upon enforcing it more effectually, I cannot pretend to augurate: but I fear it will not be made to prevail among mankind preſently, unleſs the Millennium ſhould arrive in the current century, as ſome commentators on the Apocalypſe have foretold. With reſpect to great merchants and traders, who have juſt extended their commerce and experience to a pitch that renders them capable of being more ſerviceable to their country than before, ſince they may be preſumed to have entered upon their profeſſions ſolely with a view of gain, if they ſhould ever outlive this paſſion, I would preſcribe them a large potion too for the public emolument. Then for poets, players, fidlers, and the like, as they rarely make a fortune; and their occupations drudged in day after day can be no emolument to themſelves, they can do nothing for our entertainment further than driven by mere neceſſity, unleſs you keep up their ſpirits continually with a dram of the ſame.

But though I am ſo indulgent to the uſe of this noxious drug, where it cannot be done without, yet

yet as apothecaries when diſpenſing a recipe wherein antimony, ſolanum, laudanum, or mercury is an ingredient, are extremely careful to weigh the exact quantity, becauſe a grain too much might prove fatal to the patient: ſo would I not have a ſpeck of vanity admitted more than abſolutely neceſſary for the caſe, but every redundance of it mortified, or rather the whole ſo far as feaſible made to change its quality by drawing off the thought from a compariſon of perſons to that of things, which we have ſeen before will work as vigorouſly where it can be obtained in equal degree.

16. And the better to ſatisfy ourſelves of there being a real difference between the deſires of excellence and of excelling, we may remark how very frequently the one leads aſtray from the other, fixing the attention upon ſhow and appearance, rather than upon ſolid ſubſtance and intrinſic value. It chooſes to move alone in a narrow ſphere, where nothing noble or important can be achieved, rather than ſhare jointly with others in the movement of mighty engines by which much good might be effected. Where did the deſire of excelling ever glow more intenſely than in Ceſar? whoſe favourite ſaying we are told was this, That he had rather be the firſt man in a paltry village, than the ſecond in Rome. Did not Alexander, another madman in the ſame ſpecies of frenzy, chide his tutor Ariſtotle for publiſhing to the world

thoſe diſcoveries in philoſophy he would have had reſerved for himſelf alone? But if he eſteemed learning an excellence, it would have been a more excellent deed to have ſpread it with his conqueſts. It muſt be allowed that none ever ſurpaſſed theſe ſurpaſſers of mankind in the paſſion for comparative glory, unleſs it were the Devil, into whoſe mouth Milton has with great propriety put the like thought with Ceſar's, Better to reign in hell than ſerve in hevaen: and we are told the ſame vain-glorious Being traverſes the world with indefatigable zeal to deſtroy excellence wherever he can find it.

On the other hand the moſt excellent works have been achieved without a mixture of vanity: Chriſt had none: his Apoſtles had none: but he taught them meekneſs and humility as a principal rule of conduct, and rebuked the ſons of Zebedee on their betraying a ſlight inclination to excel. If we can ſuſpect any of them of having a tincture, it muſt be Paul: and perhaps this might be the meſſenger of Satan ſent to buffet him, to whom were owing his angry overbearing ſtile, and obſcure haſty method of argumentation, producing thoſe dark ſpeeches which the unwary wreſt to their own deſtruction. With reſpect to the mention of white robes with palms in the hands, and ſitting upon thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Iſrael, we may underſtand of thoſe as we are taught to

underſtand of ſome Jewiſh inſtitutions, that they were given for the hardneſs of our hearts, but it was not ſo from the beginning, that is, not contained in the original deſign of rectifying the ſentiments, but neceſſary indulgencies to human infirmity, which cannot always riſe even to a religious zeal without a gentle lift from vanity. But the whole Papal ſyſtem, moſt of the hereſies and ſchiſms, the corruptions and perverſions of Chriſtianity have ſprung from the deſire of domineering, overtopping, and excelling.

Then if we turn to the heathen ſages, Lycurgus and Solon, thoſe two excellent lawgivers, had none: Socrates, the prime apoſtle of reaſon, Euclid and Hippocrates, had none: whereas Protagoras with his brother ſophiſts, Diogenes, Epicurus, Lucretius, the Stoics who were the bigots, and the latter Academics who were the freethinkers of antiquity, were overrun with it. And among moderns, Boyle, Newton, Locke, have made large improvements in the ſciences without aid of vanity: while ſome others I could name, having drawn in copiouſly of that intoxicating vapour, have laboured only to obſcure and perplex them. Pride is ſuppoſed to have been the Devil's fall: aſpiring to be Gods worked the fall of Man: the firſt murderer was made ſuch by ſeeing his brother's offering better accepted than his own: we ſee inſtances daily of ſtrifes, contentions, diſturbances,

diſturbances, diſappointments, vexations ſpringing from the deſire of excelling; and where moſt beneficial, it often proves like the cow that kicks down the milk ſhe has given. Hence we may fairly conclude the world would go on infinitely better if men would learn to do without it: and we may rank it among thoſe evils permitted by Providence in order to bring forth ſome unknown good therefrom, and which ought never to be ſubmitted to voluntarily, unleſs for the ſame reaſon as we ſubmit to ſome great diſpleaſure, for the ſake of removing or eſcaping a greater.

17. This being the caſe, it ſeems the greateſt of all abſurdities that men ſhould be proud of their pride and vain of their vanity: yet we often ſee it made the topic of panegyric that ſuch a hero diſdained to do any thing like other folks, that he could not bear to rank among the reſt of his ſpecies, could not be ſatisfied without ſurpaſſing all that went before him, and eclipſing all his cotemporaries, but aimed always at eminence, and being more than man. But theſe are proper topics of ſatire as indicating a ſelfiſh narrow mind, fond of inſulting and triumphing over his fellow creatures, a ſhallow judgement taken with a ſhadow nor ever reaching to the ſolid ſubſtance. For admiration is a bauble neceſſary to bribe children into their good, becauſe little maſter will not learn his ſpelling book, nor miſs hold up her head, unleſs

leſs you tell them one will be admired above other children for his learning, and the other for her genteel carriage: ſo you muſt give them the rattle to entice them into the way that you would lead. The like artifice is ordinarily carried on throughout all the ſtages of education, and young people come out into the world with a reſolution if not a confident opinion of excelling every thing they find in it.

According as any part of learning is attained, applauſes are leſs laviſhly beſtowed thereupon, and the lure turned upon the gaining ſome new accompliſhment; for nobody applauds the overgrown ſchoolboy for being able to read, nor the batchelor of arts that he can conſtrue Virgil, becauſe it would be needleſs after habit has rendered the practice eaſy, and the uſes of it are diſcerned. So that applauſe is no more than an expedient to ſupply the want of diſcernment in youth, and raiſe an artificial deſire of thoſe attainments whoſe advantages are yet unſeen: and whoever cannot act all his life without ſuch inſtigation, nor diſcern the intrinſic value and excellence of what he ought to do, continues a child all his life, without ever having his judgement ripened to the full maturity of manhood.

But if there be ability to perform extenſive ſervices, it is not in mortal man to go through all the labours and difficulties requiſite for accompliſhing them by the meer ſtrength of pub-

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lic ſpirit, for we have not enough of this vivifying principle in our natures: ſo we muſt ſupply the place with an ardor for excelling, or ſhall never effect the good in our power. Very true, this I admit without heſitation: but then the filthy load of indolence and ſelfiſhneſs that burdens us, is an infirmity of our conſtitution, and the diſcharging it by ſuch way as we can, muſt be regarded as a neceſſity of nature, which is certainly right to be complied with, but ſurely no matter of boaſting. One might like better to have no neceſſities of nature, but this is not in our power, therefore I am not aſhamed of having them, becauſe I cannot keep my body in health without them: yet I ſhould never think of bragging that I went acroſs the yard regularly, nor making that a topic of panegyric upon any body. It may be proper for jockeys and running footmen to keep themſelves ſpare and light by cathartics, and if their profeſſion demands ſuch regimen, I cannot blame them for practiſing it. So if Alexander and Ceſar could never be eaſy off the ſtool I would not deny them that needful utenſil, ſo long as their way of life and inceſſant hurry of enterprize required a mind perpetually alert, and they laboured under a paralytic inſenſibility to public good and intrinſic excellence, not to be removed without continual evacuation: nevertheleſs it might have become them better to have concealed both their infirmity, and method of

diſcharging it from all, than expect upon theſe accounts to be made the ſubjects of adoration.

18. But this lax habit, how much ſoever allowable where there is a long career of public ſervice which cannot be run through without it, little deſerves our recommendation for the benefit of the patient himſelf: it may ſooth his fancy for the preſent, as I have met with ſome people who profeſs to find vaſt amuſement in the meditations of a water cloſet, but when once grown inveterate, there is no ſtopping it until it has worried him off his legs and proved fatal at laſt. Your perpetual rhubarb-chewers of vanity get a canine appetite which the moſt luxurious ſucceſs cannot ſatisfy: they never leaving running from one ſplendid folly to another, till they deſtroy themſelves. If Perſia be ſubdued, our hero-errant muſt ſeek adventures at the Ganges: if the army mutiny againſt being carried out of the known world, he muſt lead them over the Egyptian deſarts to force an adoption from Ammonian Jove: if no further conqueſts remain, he muſt out brave the elements and defy the chilling power of Cydnus to do its worſt upon his conſtitution: if ſtrength of nature, or fortune kinder than he deſerved, carry him ſafe through this imminent danger too, the young Ammon having nothing left to ſurpaſs on earth, will needs ſurpaſs his brother Bacchus in the godlike attribute of drinking, ſo he ſwallows the grand Herculean cup again and

and again, until at laſt he ſucceeds in waſhing life away.

Nor let the potent flatter themſelves that this thirſt of glory is peculiar to them, for it is to be found among fidlers and ſonnet-makers; and multitudes, who have no proſpect of ever riſing to fame or power, yet indulge themſelves in vain imaginations of directing, chaſtiſing, governing, and exerciſing powers they have not: to which perhaps the ſtudy of romances and novels may have not a little contributed, by leading the perſons converſant in them to fancy themſelves actors in ſcenes ſimilar to what they have ſeen deſcribed. This humour endangers the like conſequences as ambition though in a lower degree; for our ideas being apt to run ſpontaneouſly in the trains whereto they have been accuſtomed, there is a great hazard that ſome parts of the character aſſumed in reverie will ſlip unawares into the conduct in real life, which may occaſion great improprieties of action and grievous inconveniencies. For the like reaſon it is a very pernicious though too common effect of parental fondneſs, to breed up children with a notion of their extraordinary parts and accompliſhment, or any other unparalleled external, or bodily advantage: for being taught to look upon themſelves as ſuperior to every thing elſe, they will naturally deſpiſe what is ſuitable to their talents and ſituation, drive at things improper or impoſſible, gain

a general ill will, and perhaps run themſelves into broils by claiming a reſpect and deference not belonging to them.

19. If we examine how we come by this paſſion for excelling, it will give us no very favourable opinion of it: ſome may ſuppoſe it innate in great ſouls, and ſo many other ſentiments have been ſuppoſed innate, becauſe neither the time nor the methods are remembered in which they were introduced. But nature gives us none other propenſity than for pleaſure: ſo the child can be eaſy and pleaſed itſelf, it cares not and obſerves not what happens to other people; and ſome little familiarity with objects gained by a courſe of time, muſt be allowed to give the knack of comparing, and diſcerning its ſuperiority above other children. How then is this moſt uſually acquired? not by rational diſcovery, not by maturity of experience, nor the documents of prudent inſtructors: but by the nurſe, the ſervants, or the mother, improved by daily examples of others poſſeſſed with the like paſſion, and perfected by the acclamations of the mob, or intereſted encomiums of flatterers. Every body ſays it is a fine thing to ſhine in compariſon, it pleaſes becauſe it pleaſes, for other reaſon they will give none: if you pretend to doubt of it, they wonder you can doubt, and anſwer with exclamations at your peculiarity.

Nor

Nor can other good reaſon for ſelf-valuation be found, unleſs that it urges to ſtrive in the attainment or performance of things uſeful or excellent: therefore ſo far as it anſwers this purpoſe it is juſtifiable, but no further; and this rule may aſcertain both the meaſure and the objects whereon it ought to be placed. But it carries nothing intrinſic independent on that ſervice to recommend it, not even the privilege of being uncommon, as thoſe who are moſt vain of it fondly perſuade themſelves: for nothing is more common or vulgar than the deſire of excelling; the Roman mob had it as well as Ceſar, and that was the reaſon they admired his grandeur, becauſe they thought it a charming thing to poſſeſs. Every one of them would have been overjoyed to have been Emperor, but he alone had the means afforded him of gratifying his deſire: ſo the difference, ſo much vaunted of, was none other than between a man whoſe appetite lies quiet becauſe he has no victuals, and another in whom the cravings are doubled by the ſight of dainties lying within his reach. But the means of gratification he had no title to value himſelf upon, they being extraneous to himſelf, the gifts or rather the loans of nature and fortune, not the property of the poſſeſſor.

For we have found no reaſon in the courſe of our enquiries to imagine a difference in the ſpiritual ſubſtances of men, which are themſelves,

ſelves, every thing thing corporeal being adventitious and ſeparable from them: but they are all equally capable of receiving whatever perceptions are impreſſed upon them, and moving whatever material particle comes within the ſphere of their activity: ſo their powers of perception and action depend upon the configuration or preſent ſtate of their bodily machine, and mental organization.

But if this be too dry and abſtruſe argumentation for the maſter of the world, let us aſk whether it was his own exploit that he was born in imperial Rome, of a patrician family, and name which the heralds could derive from the Trojan Iulus, inſtead of being the ſon of Alphenus the ſhrewd-working cobler. Mr Waller thinks, Great Julius in the mountains bred, perhaps ſome flock or herd had led: the world's ſole ruler might have been but the beſt wreſtler on the green. But then nature muſt have furniſhed him with a ſtout nimble pair of legs, or he would have hardly aſpired to throw all his brother bumpkins. Nor was birth and bodily activity enough without an exquiſite texture of brain enabling him to call all the Roman citizens by name; and dictate to three amanuenſes together. And yet with all theſe bounties of nature to befriend him, he might have loſt all the fruits of them by want of proper tendence in his childhood, a little negligence of his nurſe might have made him ricketty, an unlucky bump

bump upon the head rendered him ſtupid, or idle tales of Fauns, Satyrs, Lemures or Divinations, filled him with ſuperſtition ſo as to become weakly, hyppiſh, and puſillanimous ever after. Neither without the violent ſtruggles between the nobles and populace would he have had any encouragement to think of over-topping his Compatriots. Had any of theſe circumſtances fallen out amiſs, we may preſume he would have had little ſhare of that noble ſpirit of ambition, which made him prefer being the firſt man in a village before the ſecond at Rome.

20. It is a trite obſervation that the ſillieſt people are the vaineſt, and if ſuch chance to be placed in high fortunes, which make them the admiration of the generality, they are excuſable from their imbecillity to reſiſt the force of ſympathy: but that perſons of large underſtandings and ſtrong natural parts ſhould be driven along by the torrent, ſeems out of character; that thoſe who pretend always to lead, never to follow, ſhould yet follow implicitly the ſuperficial notions of a populace, ſhould take their ruling principle from the babblings of a nurſery, be deluded by the current forms of vulgar language to judge of things by compariſon, may be thought matter of aſtoniſhment. Such, of all men, ought beſt to know the grounds of their own ſentiments, to chooſe their perſuaſions, and form their eſtimation for themſelves independently on popular bias. If they perceive themſelves

themſelves unable to run briſkly enough in the career they have found intrinſically laudable as being intrinſically beneficial, without the aid of vanity, they have reaſon to be mortified at their inability rendering the aſſiſtance of ſuch a dangerous auxiliary needful, but none to let it gain upon them a hair's breadth further than that neceſſity requires. For vanity is a paſſion, and the paſſions, though ſometimes excellent ſervants, always prove bad maſters.

It has been ſhown in the Chapter on Free-will, that we are guided in all our motions with as unerring certainty as the beſt managed horſe: we do not always know which way our rider will make us take at the very next turning juſt before us, much leſs at miles diſtance. Our appetites and paſſions are the ſpurs and bridles that govern us, by which we are made to walk, or gallop, to amble or curvet, to toil againſt the ſteepy hill, or ruſh down the dangerous precipice, to take the adventurous leaps of folly, or plunge into the ſloughs of vice. Theſe are the impediments abridging our freedom, and ſtirring up that contrariety of Wills within us, which, whenever we feel a want of liberty, was the occaſion of our thraldom. Nor can we be certain whoſe dominion we lie immediately under; it is not impoſſible there may be ſubordinate governors, creatures of a higher ſpecies, who ſerve their uſes upon us as we do with beaſts of draught and burden: this impeaches

impeaches not the government of Providence, whoſe univerſal plan comprizes all degrees of ſubordination, adjuſting them ſeverally to the general deſign.

What though a ſparrow lies at the mercy of ſome unlucky boy that has gotten a ſtring about its leg, ſtill we know both from reaſon and Scripture, that it falleth not to the ground without our heavenly Father. Yet nobody would wiſh to be in the condition of the ſparrow with his leg in a ſtring, nor fall under the thraldom of any creature, The evils permitted by Heaven, though deſigned to work out ſome greater good, nevertheleſs are always grievous in ſome part of their operation: how much ſoever they may tickle the fancy at firſt, the wiſeman will ſee this is only a bait to tempt the heedleſs gudgeon, and will ſtrive to avoid them whenever he can.

Among thoſe evils, vanity ought to be counted one, as containing no ſolid ſubſtance to create an intrinſic value, or give it title to be denominated a good: it has none other ground than the deluſion of an imaginary propriety in what are really the goods of nature or fortune depoſited in our keeping. So that the beſt furniſhed ſtand in no better caſe than the aſs in the fable carrying the image of Cybele: the opening croud fall proſtrate on either ſide as he paſſes, but their adoration is paid to the Goddeſs not to the beaſt, who would ſell for no more at a fair than

than his brother Long-ear, carrying two bundles of rags with a gypſy brat in each of them. But alas! we poor ſtrutting mortals are not ſuch perſons of conſequence as Cybele's aſs: we none of us carry the whole Goddeſs fully dreſſed in all her gorgeous robes and precious ſymbols: we creep in long proceſſion one behind another, each bearing ſomething from the ſacriſty.

The great and potent carry her crown embattled with turrets: the rich and opulent carry the gold and ſilver veſſels for her ſacrifices: the magnificent and elegant her nice-wrought robes and needle-pointed veſtments: the beautiful and witty her flowers, embelliſhments and perfumes: even the dancing maſter, the milliner, the French friſeur, and Italian ſinger, have gotten a rag of Cybele powerful enough to draw tranſports of admiration from connoiſſeurs. Thoſe laden with uſeful knowledge or accompliſhment, carry ſome of the moſt valuable of her jewels: yet ſtill they are hers, not the beaſt's that bears them; nor do they draw much admiration by their own luſtre, unleſs ſet off with a multitude of falſe ſparks and a deal of ſilver flouriſhing after the modern taſte. Virtue itſelf is but an inner garment, the fine linen kerchief worn neareſt the boſom of the Goddeſs: for though we muſt require it for ourſelves, yet the abilities, the opportunities, the inducements previous to the acquiſition,

were

were of foreign growth imported hither from celeſtial regions.

21. Thus we ſee how little reaſon there is to value ourſelves upon any thing we poſſeſs, whether external, bodily or mental advantage, whether accidental, or the produce of our own induſtry: for we do not poſſeſs in property but only as uſufructuaries, and we know the lading will be taken off our backs, if not ſooner, yet at the end of our journey through life; but for what new charge ſhall be entruſted with us for our next journey, we depend upon the bounty and merciful kindneſs of Heaven. And this may account for the diſtribution of applauſe being made among perſons ſo diſproportionately to the real value of their endowments and actions: becauſe upon this ſcore they merit none, but ſolely for the ſake of the good effects expected to enſue upon beſtowing it. Therefore praiſe and reward are moſt diſcreetly applied to the novice, the giddy, the ſhallow, and the ſelfiſh, who have none other motive to beſtir themſelves in a good courſe; for where a man has no ſenſe of his duty, you muſt bribe him to it if you will have it done: but whoever pretends to labour in purſuit of virtue or moral ſcience, has leaſt reaſon of any to repine at miſſing his ſhare, becauſe to him leaſt of any it is either needful or ſafe, but much of it would vitiate his virtue, and turn his ardor for

for knowledge into meer pretence deceiving even himſelf.

For virtue loſes her eſſence, becoming ſelf-intereſt, when the eye fixes conſtantly upon the gratification or profit beyond: and when the credit of making diſcoveries comes to be the object in view during the inveſtigation, it hangs like a dead weight upon the judgement, warping away the thoughts inſenſibly from what is juſt and ſolid, to what is ſpecious and glittering. Therefore there is no prudence in ſuffering a humour of vanity to hold up this object before us; for if it carry us faſter than we could go without, it carries us like a runaway horſe, ſo much wider out of our way. Nor need we ſolicit ourſelves either for ſelf-complacence or commendation from others; for provided we take care to ſhape our conduct aright, ſo much of either as can turn into wholeſome nouriſhment will drop into our mouths without our ſeeking.

22. I have now done my beſt to know this ſiren Vanity, as the moſt likely means to eſcape it, for forewarned forearmed. I have endeavoured to turn it inſide out, to diſcover its emptineſs, to lay open its uglineſs, and raiſe a diſguſt at the foulneſs it is found to contain when diveſted of its coverings: for it is the reproach of human nature, it breeds like vermin in the corruptions and infirmities of our conſtitutions, it is an epidemical diſeaſe ſpreading like

like the peſtilence: for the trifling world around us ſo fills the air with infection, as the London ſmoke does with blacks, that we can neither keep ourſelves nor our furniture tolerably clean without continual waſhings and ſcrubbings. It is ſuch a diſſembler there is no getting rid of it entirely, when you go to hunt it down moſt eagerly it will follow cloſe at your elbow, mingling among your train, like an accomplice of a pick pocket, who joins in with the croud as one of the purſuers. For a man may be vain of his exemption from the vanities he ſees in another, or more vain of his having no vanity at all himſelf: when once he begins to ſay in his own mind, nobody has leſs vanity than I, he has more than he knows of, for all advantageous compariſon foments it. One would think the contemplation of our own follies and fond imaginations ſhould be the ſureſt recipe to mortify it: but ſometimes the contrary falls out by our growing vain in the compariſon of our former with our preſent ſelves. We may take pleaſure in abuſing our nature to exaggerate our corrections of it, in example of the greateſt ſages of antiquity, who have performed wonders that way: puffed up with the conceit of how much we ſhould cheat Zopyrus the phyſiognomiſt, and how our friends who know us would laugh as heartily at him as Alcibiades did, if he were here to try his ſkill upon our features.

Therefore it is the emptieſt of all vanities to fancy ourſelves utterly void of it; this lulls us into a ſecurity that leaves open the door for many others to intrude: it were better to poſſeſs our minds with the impoſſibility of eſcaping perfectly, and then we ſhall ſtand more upon our guard againſt treachery within, which would let in new enemies upon us. I think I may anſwer for the benefit of this prepoſſeſſion and conſequent attention upon experience, having every now and then perceived ſome lurking vanity ſtealing ſlily in through crannies where one would leaſt expect it, which convinces me there are traitors within, though I cannot yet find them out. All one can do with reſpect to the poiſon unexpelled, is to diſperſe it upon the ſkin, as phyſicians draw a gout they cannot cure, away from the nobler parts. So taking for granted I muſt have ſome fund of vanity in my compoſition as well as other folks, it is better to let it evaporate in odd thoughts, quaint expreſſions, ſparkling ſimilies, and long ſpun allegories, than work into the ſinews and marrow of argumentation. Perhaps there may be no hurt in ſprinkling ſomething that will ſtartle and rouze the Reader when beginning to nod over a dry ſubject: and if he have a ſpice of the common malady himſelf, he will feel a ſoothing pleaſure in reflecting how much more gravely and decently he could have managed the ſame topics.

But

But in all ſerious enquiries it will prove a moſt dangerous enemy, creating an intereſt in ſome particular iſſue, before it is ſeen which way our premiſſes will naturally lead, and ſo employing reaſon in the ſervile taſk of maintaining a point, rather than its proper office of diſcovering a truth.

Therefore I muſt endeavour to guard againſt this invader of liberty as well as all others, proceeding with a becoming courage and vigilant circumſpection, not overawed by great authorities, nor frighted by terrors of criticiſm, yet keeping a reverence for received opinions and juſt deference for the judgement of others, bold, not arrogant in delivering my thoughts, not pretending to dictate, but offering for conſideration, cautious of giving offence, turning things to examine them on all ſides before they go from me, and regardful of conſequences, ſedulous to do my beſt, but content if that beſt ſhall prove but little, not having the vanity to diſdain ſmall ſervices or even imperfect hints where I can do no better. Under the conduct of theſe guides I purpoſe to iſſue forth on my progreſs with a reſolution, for I can but reſolve, not undertake, to preſerve a ſober decent freedom throughout, with a perfect indifference to every thing beſide truth, uſe and reconcilement.

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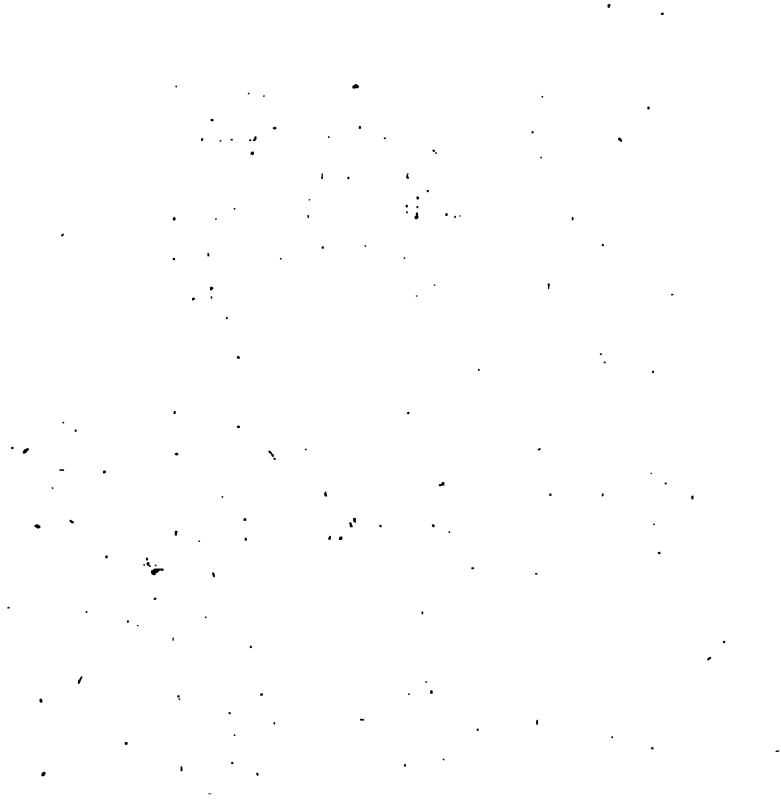

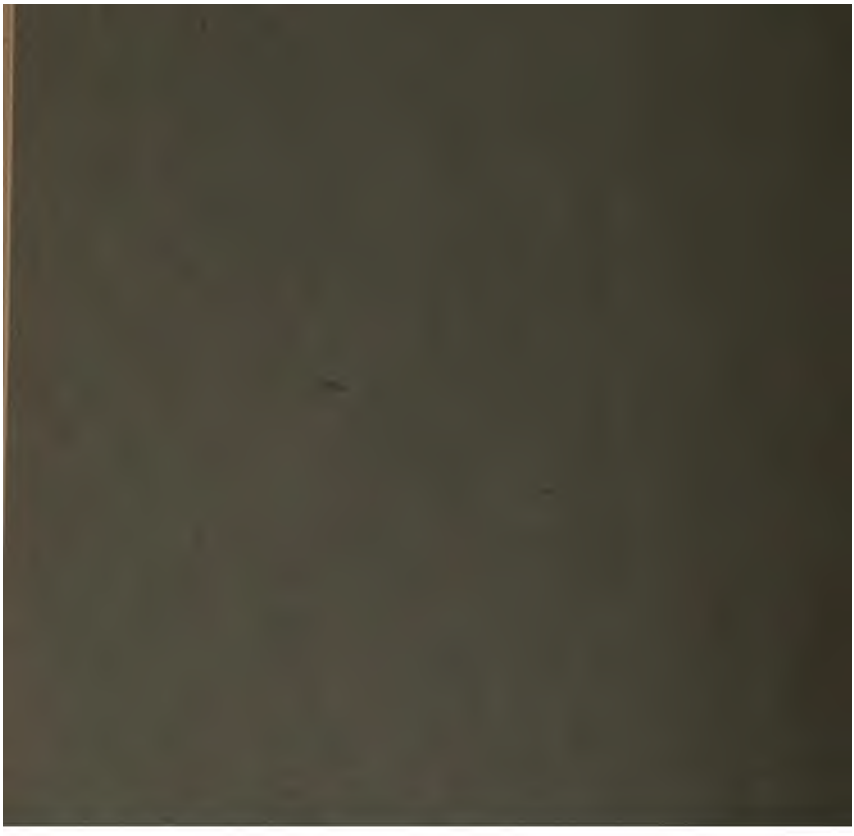

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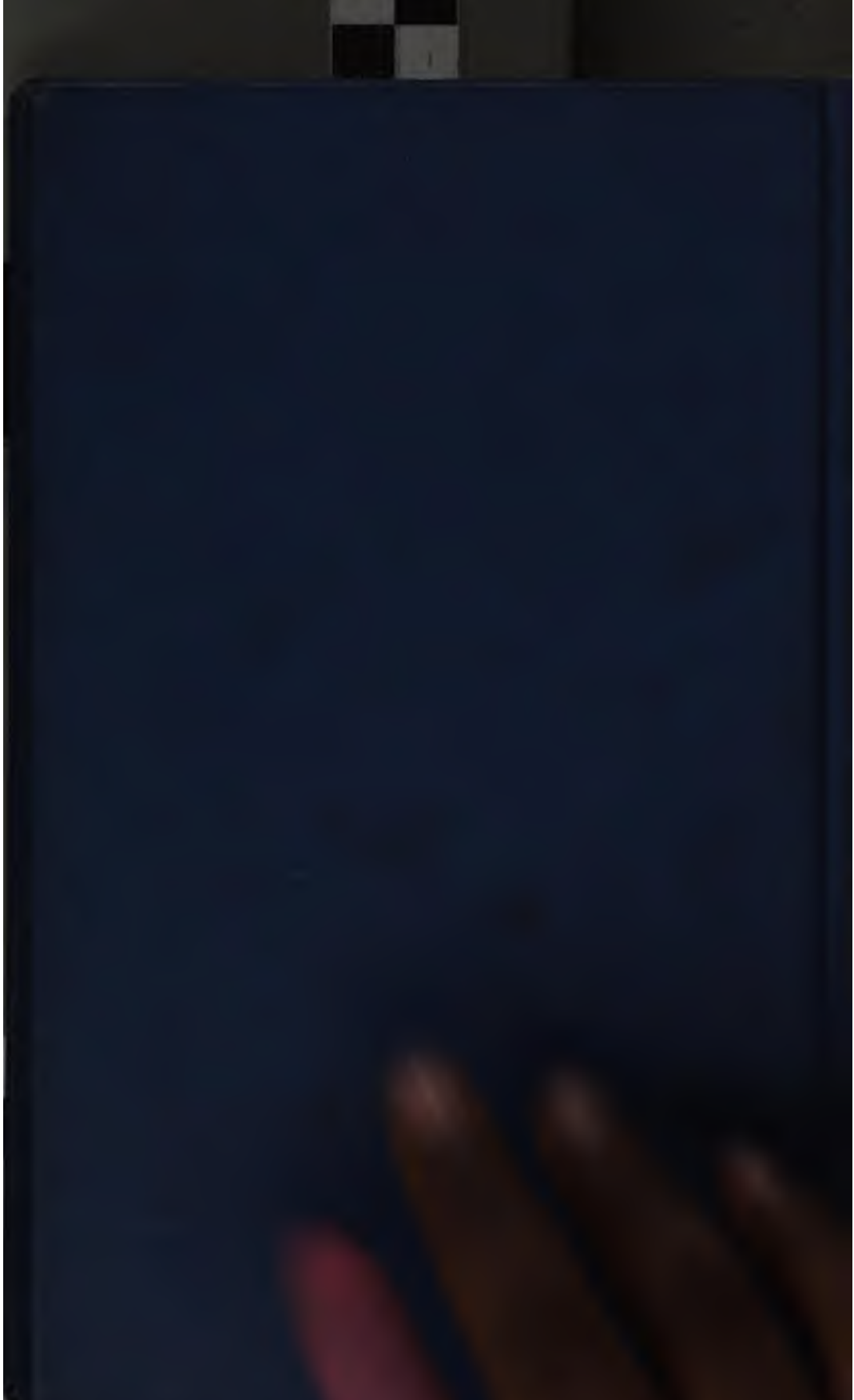
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